

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## A DATELESS BARGAIN.

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### CHAPTER LI.

It was just about the time that Uncle Archie and Joyce, looking into each other's blank faces, confessed themselves to be at their wits' end, that Frank received his first message from Ned.

Frank might have confessed himself in much the same predicament as Uncle Archie, for he had been putting to himself one or two uncomfortable questions, to which his wits were incapable of supplying adequate answers. Such for instance as, "Supposing mischance of some sort has overtaken Ned, and he is dead, without revealing my hiding-place, how on earth am I to become aware of the fact? How long, in common reason, may it be expected of me to remain here waiting for some sign of his existence?"

It was easy enough to recall Ned's vehement promise that he would provide effectually for such an emergency; it was a more difficult task to feel the matter set at rest by it. Even Ned's hurried line only succeeded for a time in allaying apprehension. The note was brought by the little fishing-boat, which, in fair weather, coasted between the islands, bringing from Thorshavn cheeses and tinned meats in return for the sheep's-wool stockings knitted by old Christian's daughters.

Frank, with eager fingers, tore open the envelope. Perhaps it might contain a line from Joyce, he thought. A chill of disappointment fell upon him when he saw only the few following lines from Ned:

"Am hard pressed, dogged, and watched night and day—dare not attempt flight. Give me time."

Second thoughts, however, told him it was better than no message at all, and he tried to get his utmost of hope out of the few brief words.

It may be conjectured, nevertheless, that he would have read the lines with other eyes could he have known how Ned had failed in his share of the compact; how Joyce's terrible suspense remained unlifted; how his own brief note to her, instead of finding its way to her hand, had been held in the flame of a candle till it was burnt to ashes, and the ashes even carefully scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Of all this, however, he was necessarily ignorant, and his trust in the Irishman's sense of honour remained unshaken. It seemed to him an altogether unworthy thing to harbour a suspicion against a man who had saved his life at the risk of his own, without exacting so much as bond or promise in return.

Old Christian's eldest son, who had acted as messenger, eyed him as he read the letter.

"Your friend stays long," he said in his composite idiom.

Frank put as cheerful a look on his face as he could command; and tried to make the man understand that everything was all right, and that people could not always keep their appointments to the day and hour.

The man trailed his fowler's net along the rock, and, on the strength of the cheerful look on Frank's face, forthwith invited him to join in a fowling expedition.

"The wind was favourable—a little sport would make the time pass more swiftly," he intimated.

So Frank threw himself heartily on the man for companionship that day, and in his newly-recovered buoyancy of spirit he equalled everyone of the well-

seasoned fowler's daring exploits over crag and chasm, in the teeth of a strong gale which, blowing shorewards, swept in the sea-fowl by dozens into the net. The exercise heightened his spirits. He began to read a world of meaning in Ned's few hurried lines.

"The man was heartily sick of his slavery," he said to himself, "not a doubt he would soon make a desperate effort and gain his freedom." Then what a hey-day of gladness he and Joyce would keep together—why, the happy festival on the eve of what was to have been his wedding-day would be a funeral feast by comparison!

But this buoyancy of spirit was after all of short duration. A few days of sea-fowling, alternated with cod-fishing, saw the end of it. Back to the solitude of the lighthouse tower, and the weary gazing through the telescope, Frank betook himself once more.

"It's more than flesh and blood can bear," he would groan sometimes, feeling the young eager life within him well-nigh annihilated by the silence, the immensity of outside creation; of the vast rolling ocean, the empty sky, the bare, brown, awful rocks.

A solitude can be a prison or a paradise, according to the point of view from which it is regarded. To Ned, hunted, harassed with limited ambitions, keen young love for life, above all, for a life of purely physical freedom, it doubtless would have figured in the latter guise. He would have gloried in the reckless daring of rough seas and rougher winds which the life of the Faroese whale-fisher involved. He would have outdone the boldest of the fowlers in their desperate clambering adown tremendous precipices in the teeth of a driving gale. If he could have reached this haven, the chances were he would have settled down a veritable Viking among Vikings, and, in the smiles of some yellow-haired, blue-eyed maiden have learnt to forget his first ill-starred passion.

Frank's notion of a paradise necessarily included higher ideals. Judged by these the island solitude took but low rank. Quite apart from the special circumstances of his life at that period, there was in his nature but little that was congenial to solitude and inaction.

He had said to Ned, and had meant it, that if circumstances had not made him a lawyer, he would have chosen to be a sailor. That might be true, but the chances were that, if he could not have seen straight

ahead of him a prospect of stepping on board a flagship, he and salt water would speedily have parted company. Quite apart from his true, passionate love for Joyce, and his bitter disappointment at the postponement of his happiness, the very energy with which he had worked the lines of his life, rendered him intolerant of any interruption to it. A pause in his career at any moment would have been an agony to him. Silence, solitude, were for him synonyms for vacuity and extinction.

So, gloomy and despondent, he set himself to bear his banishment as best he could, drawing largely upon his stores of fortitude to keep up even the appearance of equanimity before his kindly entertainers.

Old Christian's son tried in vain to tempt him on a second fowling expedition.

Frank looked down the black chasm of shelving rocks, shook his head, and turned his back on it. In the gloomy despondency which had succeeded the transient buoyancy caused by Ned's letter, he did not dare to test the strength of his grip upon good luck. He shrank from physical danger in a way he had never in his whole life known himself to shrink before.

"Everything was against him; good luck was a thing of the past," he said to himself now, as day after day went by and there came not another word from Ned.

Once in the old happy time gone by, he had dared, as only the young and happy can dare, to trifle with and defer his happiness. Now Fate, in her irony, had turned the tables on him; had brought his cup of happiness close to his lips, only to snatch it away again.

It seemed to him that he and Joyce in this world were never to meet again.

It was scarcely to be wondered at if, in the extremity of his misery, he asked himself a few more questions—such as: "Supposing, through this enforced inaction of his, Buckingham and a few other scoundrels contrived to elude justice, might he not be held morally responsible for the fact?" Or to put it another way: "Would not the guilt of a broken implied promise be less than that involved in leaving at large acknowledged traitors and criminals?"

Then when his conscience gave a sturdy "no" to sophistry, it shifted its ground and put its questions in another form, thus: "Would it of necessity be a breach of his



implied word of honour to communicate with the police at London in some round-about fashion, putting them on the scent of the timeless League? Would Ned's chances of escape of necessity be endangered? Could not the police be made to understand that Buckingham and the O'Sheas were first to be secured, that Ned was in no sort a willing accomplice in their plots?"

But to these queries his legal knowledge, aided by his practical common-sense, gave a succession of most decisive negatives. What evidence had he to offer that would inculpate the three other criminals, and leave Donovan unimpeached? Did they not all four, so far as regarded treasonable conspiracy, stand upon the same footing? What right had he to suppose that Ned, no matter how hard pressed he might be, would turn informer, and save his life to the hazard of his comrades' lives? Did not his previous knowledge of the man point to a diametrically opposite conclusion? Much as Donovan had owned he loved his own life, he had been willing to put it in jeopardy for one to whom he was in no sense bound by ties either of kindred or friendship.

And when Frank had reached this point in his self cross-questioning he started aghast at himself, and the sorry figure he had showed beneath it. He felt forced to admit that the seamy side of his nature had indeed come uppermost, when he allowed himself to balance questions of a purely personal nature, under the guise of impersonal benevolence, against his freely volunteered promise, "I shall be simply a dead man, Ned, till you give the word."

So the dark days of the Northern winter went slowly by, at such a snail's pace indeed that Frank began to lose count of them, and would say to himself, as he got up from his straw mattress in the morning, or threw himself wearily upon it at night, "Now where are we? In the middle of January, February, or March? Great Heavens, was ever winter so interminably eked out as this?"

It was not until its very last hour was counted out, not until the fogs had begun to lessen visibly, the real breath of spring to make itself felt in the salt breeze, that another brief message came from Ned. It ran thus:

"Give me a little longer. For the love of Heaven, remember your share of the bargain."

That must have been written and despatched about the time that Uncle

Archie, wincing under Morton's suggestion that Frank was in voluntary hiding, had bidden Joyce take up the cudgels she scorned in defence of her lover.

A little later on, just when Joyce, despairing of her own strength, was taking refuge in flight from Captain Buckingham's persecution, Donovan was despatching a third letter to Frank, brief like the others, but a little more desperate, as follows:

"Hunted almost to death. Don't forget I lie at your mercy now."

After this there came another long silence, which Frank made busy with the wildest hopes, fears, conjectures, despairs. Then just about the time when Joyce, broken-hearted, was straining her ears to catch Mab's last words, "Always the sound of the sea, Joyce," Frank, on his ocean-washed rock, was reading, with dimmed eyes and bounding pulses, Donovan's final message. It was dated from Greenock, and contained only five words:

"Thank Heaven, free at last!"

Words which might aptly have been written on the Irishman's coffin-plate. Elsewhere they lacked meaning.

#### CHAPTER LII.

THE brief, sunless Northern summer had come to an end. The islanders had cut their rye and garnered it, dug their last crop of potatoes and stored them. The women were busy carding their wool for their winter knitting, the men were organising a cod-fishing expedition on a larger scale than usual. There had chanced to be that year a failure in the catches on their own coast, so this expedition was planned to go a little farther a-field in hopes of a better find. It took all the men from Light Island save and except only old Christian, the deaf-mute. Frank had of late again thrown himself—somewhat fitfully it must be owned—into the daily pursuits of these worthy simple-minded folk. One cannot live out one's life at agony point. An active, healthy man, under thirty years of age, must of necessity find an outlet for muscular vigour. So he had helped the men in turns to catch their fish or their fowl, or to farm their land.

As the little fleet of cod-fishing boats put off from the shore, he stood on a ledge of rock waving a hearty farewell to the men.

"Now," he said to himself, with the ring of Ned's final message still in his ears, "this is the last I shall see of these men. When they come back, not a doubt I shall be half way home."

It was a pleasant thought. It deepened the blue in the sky and the waters, turned the autumn haze into a summer's glory, put a tone of melody even into the harsh cries of the puffin and gull; in a word, set the whole fair picture of land and ocean smiling as though with a hidden joy.

Long after the boats had exchanged the waters of the Sound for the open sea he stood there, indulging in a variety of pleasant speculations. He could picture Joyce's wild intensity of joy; Mab's tender, troubled eyes, looking a greeting her lips had no power to speak; Mrs. Shenstone's possible rush of pretty speeches, to be succeeded no doubt by all sorts of ingenuous exclamations upon the sorry figure he cut in her drawing-room, with his quaintly-made garments and untrimmed hair; Uncle Archie grumbling a cynical yet hearty welcome; and Joyce making peace all round with her bright little speeches and happy smiles.

But alas for his expectations! The boats went out and the boats came in, but there came never a sign of Ned nor message from him.

Rough weather set in. Strong gales blew persistently from the north-east; the good wives on Light Island began to speculate on the chances of a whaling expedition, which had started from a neighbouring island in the spring and had not yet returned. This, and the possible hazard the incoming mail steamer to Thorshavn might run, were the staple topic of talk among the islanders.

Frank's fears, though they lay all in another direction, were not one whit less gloomy. He naturally enough concluded that Ned, on the eve of sailing from Greenock, had, through untoward circumstances, been compelled to delay his departure. It was therefore more than likely that he was on the ocean highway now. It was highly improbable that he would be able to secure a passage in a well-built, seaworthy steamer; now what might be the fate of a small fishing-smack or trading vessel in the sea that was running then?

A whole train of gloomy possibilities suggested themselves. Back again trooped the string of uncomfortable questions he thought he had set at rest for ever by the sturdy negatives he had dealt them. The ignobleness of the whole thing seemed to stifle him. He to be waiting quietly and patiently on this barren ridge of rock, with the best days of his life slipping past, when, perhaps, if the real cir-

cumstances of the case were laid bare to him, he would see that quietness and patience savoured less of the heroic than of the despicable! The mere thought was torture to him.

Then the fog set in. Light Island became once more roofed and walled with the dense ocean mist. Old Christian began wheezing and coughing a good deal, his eldest son took to sharing the lighthouse duties with him, turn and turn about.

Frank volunteered his services. He had naturally acquired some Danish idioms during his long stay on the island; the younger Christian had picked up some of his English. Their talk consequently was fairly intelligible to each other.

"I have been with you some time now; you know me and know you can trust me," Frank said. "Occupation is the first of blessings to me. I've caught your fish for you, and caught your fowl too; let me now go shares with you in the lighthouse work."

So it came about that Frank was admitted to a third share in the dreary responsibilities of lighthouse keeping. Perhaps it would be more correct to say to a half, at any rate while the rough weather prevailed, for old Christian gratefully fell in with the younger men's suggestion that, while the fog and wind lasted, he should remain quietly indoors, mend the fishing-nets, and nurse his asthma.

With nights broken in this fashion, it might be supposed that Frank had a welcome to give to a whole night's rest whenever he had a chance of it. Not so, however. A great restlessness had fallen upon him. Anything in the shape of quiet or repose was an impossibility to him. Sleep shunned him at night; his days were passed in incessant wanderings from coast to headland, from headland to Light Tower.

He made desperate efforts at reconnoitring, through field-glass and telescope. They were all fruitless efforts. Not once, while those equinoctial gales lasted, did the fog lift sufficiently to show a patch of blue sky, much less a square mile of blue ocean. His brain began to feel sick and giddy with the perpetual repetition of the one thought.

"Where under Heaven is Ned now? Of what sort or strength is the boat that is bringing him?"

The torture of those hours would have been beyond even his tough powers of endurance, could he have known who was at that moment defying wind and wave for his sake.

## SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

## DURING THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

WHEN war was declared between France and Germany in the early summer of 1870, I was sent by a London paper to act as special correspondent with MacMahon's corps d'armes, and, leaving town at twenty-four hours' notice, arrived at Strasburg with by no means too much time to spare. On arriving at Strasburg, I managed to be introduced, in an informal manner, to the gallant officer who commanded the army there assembled, and was not a little pleased when the Marshal recognised me, as having met me in Algeria some years before. Frenchmen, and more particularly French military men, are somewhat backward, or shy, of fraternising with new acquaintances; but when the latter show any desire to know them, and, more particularly as was the case with me, they show anything like a genuine admiration of the many soldier-like qualities which are to be found amongst those who compose their armies, they will always come more than half way to meet foreigners in the bond of good fellowship.

Having been ten or twelve years in the English army, added to the fact that I had not only seen a good deal of active service in India, but had also been witness of how the French troops fought in Algeria, served as a kind of bond between me and those whose future victories, as I then firmly believed, I had come to chronicle. Not only was I never allowed to breakfast or dine at my own expense, but, had I been able to consume a dozen or more meals every day, they would all, and more too, have been provided for me. In a word I was as thoroughly at home with my French hosts—for such they certainly made themselves—as if I had been on a campaign with an English force, and, perhaps, even more so. And after we marched from Strasburg, nothing could be more pleasant than the camp and all belonging to it. French officers have nothing that corresponds with our English regimental mess. In quarters the different ranks of a corps generally dine together; but on a campaign, or when marching, the three or four officers of each company join, and with an old soldier to cook and cater for them, take their meals at the same table. It was only after we got to Wissemburg, and the results of the war seemed to be more dubious than before, that stern

reality took the place of what had hitherto been a period of enjoyment.

When we reached Worth, it was evident that something very like a decisive engagement would take place, and that either the French or the German army would be badly beaten before many hours were over. I got away from the lines, and with the help of a little of that gold which is a key to most doors, managed to get up to the flat top of the tower which forms part of the village church, and there witnessed what proved to be the beginning of the end of the war, so far as the French army and nation were concerned. To me, as well as to my friends, the day proved most unfortunate. I felt so certain that MacMahon's troops would rally and eventually beat their enemy, that I delayed coming down from the tower until it was too late. By the time I got back to where I had left an old britschka with two screws of horses that I owned, the French army was in full retreat for the Vosges, the Germans were in possession of the village, and my conveyance, together with my servant who drove it, and all the clothes I had in the world, had vanished. As a matter of course, not being able to speak German, I was made a prisoner, and taken before the officer commanding the brigade that held the place. Of the treatment I received from them I had nothing whatever to complain. An officer who could speak English was sent for, and when he had read my Foreign Office passport, as well as my credentials for the paper I represented, I was at once released, on the condition of giving my parole that I would not rejoin the French army for at least seven days. I was then given a free pass, which would prevent my being made prisoner by any of the German troops, and was told I might go where I liked.

But where to go, and how to do so, was now the question. My carriage and all my kit having been looted, as I afterwards found out by the German camp followers, I had, in the way of clothes, what I stood in. Most fortunately my circular letter of credit had not shared the fate of the rest of my property. I had kept it in my breast pocket and was not a little glad that I had done so. If I could only reach Carlsruhe, I should be able to get whatever money I wanted. But how to get there was the question. It was some thirty or more English miles from Worth; there was no conveyance of any sort to be had; and even if the latter had been favourable, my whole worldly wealth



consisted, with the exception of the letter of credit, of something less than twenty francs. If I could manage to walk all the way, that very modest sum would suffice me for a very humble lodging each night, and for a moderate amount of indifferent food. I had, however, no choice. Walk I must, if I did not want to be left to starve at Worth. The journey to Carlsruhe would help to pass away the seven days, or, at any rate, a large portion of them, during which I was under parole not to rejoin the French army. To remain where I was, or to follow the French through the Vosges, was equally impossible. So I made up my mind, and started upon what promised to be, and what certainly proved, a journey that was anything but pleasant.

Whatever other drawbacks the road between Worth and Carlsruhe had, it was by no means a solitary or lonely route. It would be difficult to say whether the waggons and other conveyances going towards Germany, or those coming into France, were most numerous. The former were filled with French prisoners and wounded soldiers; the latter with fresh German troops en route for the seat of war, doctors and sisters of charity on their way to tend the sick of the German army, and every sort of war stores and supplies it is possible to imagine. There were three villages in the thirty miles of road, where I found it possible to rest at night. There was nothing in the shape of a bed-room, or even of a bed, to be had, except at prices which my very limited amount of cash rendered impossible for me. I was obliged to make the best of things, and to sleep, as well as eat, as I best could. Under such circumstances personal cleanliness was almost impossible. When I arrived, on the morning of the fourth day, at Carlsruhe, I was very far from being respectable in appearance. At Grösse's Hotel the clerk in the bureau evidently did not like to admit me, and it was only after I had shown him my passport, that he ordered a room to be got ready for me. I went at once to the bank named in my letter of credit; got what money I required; bought a suit of ready-made clothes; and after a hot bath, and using plenty of soap, began to feel as if it were possible to be clean and comfortable again; although it took two or three days before I could realise that I had got rid of the dirt and discomfort brought about by my vagabond-like pedestrian journey. On the third day after my arrival

at Carlsruhe I started for Baden, thence went over the Swiss frontier to Basle; and by that time the seven days having elapsed, I crossed the French frontier, and made my way to Laon, following, as well as I could, the direction in which public report gave out that the army under MacMahon was marching.

No one who was not a witness of what was going on in this part of France at the time of which I write, could possibly realise the immense change that had been wrought in the people since the defeat of the army at Worth. Before it took place not only the army, but all sorts and conditions of Frenchmen, looked upon the victory of their troops, and the driving out of the Germans as a mere question of time, and believed that, before many days were over, not only would the enemy be ignominiously expelled from French soil, but the French army would be marching towards Berlin. But now all this had changed. In the short period, not more than eight or nine days, that elapsed between my leaving France at Worth, and my return to it at Laon, the very nature of the people seemed to have altered, and certainly not for the better. The whole talk was about the national defeat, which they seemed to think could not be avoided after what had happened; and seemed to believe most firmly, not only that their army had not fought well, but that its chiefs had, in several instances, betrayed the forces they commanded, and had passively, if not actually, assisted the Germans to gain their victory. The army, had also changed greatly. The men of every rank, from the privates up to the Generals of Brigades, seemed taken up in discussing what their superiors did, or ordered to be done. That implicit, unquestioning obedience, which is so conspicuous in our own service, appeared to have no existence whatever amongst the French troops after their defeat at Worth. But what was, if possible, worse—worse as an augury of the future fate of the country—was the distrust which the people seemed to have of the army. Those amongst the middle classes and the peasantry, who less than a fortnight ago always showed themselves to be proud of their national troops, were now almost unanimous in declaring them to be, not only cowards, but traitors to their country; and not a few of the leading officers, MacMahon amongst the number, were said to be playing into the hands of Bismarck and

the Germans. That such accusations were not only utterly false, but were beneath contempt, goes without saying. Nor would I have referred to them in this paper, were it not to show how the French nation had, so to speak, in a great measure, prepared and trained itself for its own defeat.

At Laon I learnt that Marshal MacMahon had, with the army he commanded, made his way to Rheims, whence he intended to try and afford assistance to Bazaine, who was already surrounded at Metz. The rail from Laon towards Rheims had been cut by order of the French military authorities, so that I had no means whatever of pushing on, except by purchasing an old rattle-trap of a carriage to supply the place of the one that had been taken by the German camp followers at Worth. I was, however, fortunate enough to procure two active and fast horses, which, as will be seen presently, proved, in a great measure, the means by which I afterwards was able to effect the very narrow escape that saved my life.

Between Laon and Rheims, I passed through Chalons and Epernay, at which places I saw, for the first time, the *Francs Tireurs*, or free-shooters, a corps to which I must devote a few lines by way of description.

The corps was, in the most comprehensive possible meaning of the word, irregular. The men who composed it were not only irregular in every thing they did; but appeared to glory in their irregularity. They seemed to have very few officers, and the few they had were seldom, if ever, to be seen on duty with the men. The latter had evidently souls above obedience, for they did very much what they liked, and in the manner they liked. They evidently hated the regular army, and the latter returned the compliment with interest. When at Epernay I witnessed a skirmish between a battalion of regular infantry and a small party of German Uhlans, who were evidently feeling their way, and trying to find out what was the strength of the French troops there. The officer commanding the French outpost behaved with great judgement, trying, by retiring his men, to draw on the Uhlans, and find out their numbers. He had almost succeeded in enticing the enemy to advance, and had managed to hide the strength of his detachment, when all at once a body of *Francs Tireurs* came up, and without waiting, or even asking for orders, they began at once to blaze

away at the Germans, causing the latter to retreat. The officer commanding was very angry, and sent orders to the irregulars that they were to cease firing forthwith; but they took no notice of what was said, many of them declaring in a loud voice that the regulars were playing the game of the enemy, and did not want any of the latter to be defeated or killed. When an attempt was made to find out who was in command of the *Francs Tireurs* no such person could be found; and on an order being given that the commanding officer would cause an official enquiry to be made into the conduct of the irregulars, the whole corps, not less than five hundred strong, vanished and dispersed, so that they could no more be found.

A war correspondent has not only to observe and note what the troops do in the field, but he must also be careful not to miss an opportunity of sending off his letters to the paper he represents. In such a campaign as that which took place when the Germans invaded France, this was often very difficult to do. There were always German spies in the French camp, and it was considered very essential that these persons should not know how or when despatches to the Emperor were sent off; otherwise, as happened more than once, the future intentions, as well as other secrets of the French, would become known to the enemy. I can safely say that so far as the Staff officers of MacMahon's army were concerned, I never experienced the slightest difficulty in getting my letters off; but I had often considerable trouble in finding out when and by whom the despatches were to be sent away.

I was very anxious to let my employers in London know the exact state of affairs as regards the intended advance of MacMahon towards Metz, and how the attempt to relieve Bazaine had utterly failed. To telegraph the news was impossible, as all the wires had been cut by the enemy. I had prepared a long letter, which gave many details that had not yet been published in England, and I felt sure that if I could only manage to get what I had written to London, it would do me no little credit. As yet Sedan was not even threatened by the Germans. I knew the officer who commanded there very well, and I resolved to push on by myself, and see what could be done in the way of forwarding my letter thence over the Belgian frontier, whence it would be safe to reach London in twenty-four hours. It

took the best part of three days to reach Sedan. At Sedan I was able to procure a horse, and rode some ten miles over the Belgian frontier to Buiony, where there were neither wars nor rumours of wars. Here my letter was posted, registered, and sent off to London. I then returned to Sedan, and having the horses harnessed to the wretched old conveyance of which I was the owner, set off on my return to the headquarters of MacMahon's army, wherever they might be.

The Colonel in command at Sedan was very kind to me, gave me the best of food, and the most reliable of information, advising me, if I wanted to rejoin MacMahon's army, to make the best of my way to a small town called Mouson, some fifteen or twenty miles off, situated in the valley of the Meuse, whence, as he said, I should be pretty certain of finding the headquarters of the army. My coachman, a Swiss whom I had engaged when I bought the trap at Laon, told me that the drive from Sedan to Mouson would occupy about four hours, going at a comparatively slow pace which could not knock up the horses. It was agreed that we were to halt for an hour or so, after we had been a couple of hours on the road. I was very tired and sleepy when we left, and therefore made myself comfortable to enjoy a good sleep, thinking I should have at least two hours in which I could do so.

To my amazement, we had not gone more than a couple or three miles from Sedan, when the carriage came to a sudden halt, and I heard more than one rough voice ordering the driver not to move, unless he wished to be shot there and then. I drew back the leather curtains and looked out, when I found that some thirty or more armed men had surrounded the vehicle, and two of them opening the door, ordered me in the most brutal manner to get out. At first I thought they were soldiers, and that they were labouring under some mistake, having taken me to be somebody else. But I soon discovered that they belonged to the *Francs Tireurs*; and that they fully intended to make me a prisoner. I still thought there must be some mistake, and asked them what they wanted, telling them that I was an English newspaper correspondent, who had accompanied MacMahon all through the campaign, and was now on my way to rejoin him. "*Vous mentez*" (you lie), was the polite answer I got; and, as one of them cocked his rifle and swore he would shoot

me dead if I did not get out, I thought that discretion was the better part of valour, and got out upon the dusty road. I asked where their officers were; but they replied that there were none present, and that Frenchmen knew how to deal with Prussian spies, without being controlled by officers. I asked them what I had done that I should be made a prisoner of? They answered that I was a Prussian spy, and that they intended to try me by court-martial and shoot me. I told them that if they would only come back to Sedan with me, the Commandant of the garrison would satisfy them that I was not a Prussian, still less a spy; but an Englishman who was going about his lawful work. They said that the Commandant at Sedan was, like most of the French army, a traitor to his country; that they would not believe a word he said, but had determined to make me a prisoner and kill me. Anything so brutal as they were in their words and manner, it has never been my lot to witness in any part of the world.

At last they decided to begin what they were pleased to call a "*conseil de guerre*," or court-martial, in order that they might try me for being, as they asserted, a Prussian spy on French soil.

I question whether, in the history of the world, a greater farce or a more entirely one-sided affair was ever enacted than on this occasion. I was accused, as I said before, of being a Prussian spy; but what I came to spy upon, or in whose employment I was, my accusers, who were also my judges, did not say. A couple of dozen times at least I was told that I was what they said; and when I denied it, and said I was an Englishman, I was told "*vous mentez*" (you lie). Of the twenty-five or thirty men present, twelve resolved themselves into what they called a Court, a thirteenth individual acting as President. I offered to show them—in fact held out for their inspection—my Foreign Office passport, as well as a pass I had received from MacMahon's chief of the Staff, when I joined the army at Strasburg. But the first they would not even look at; and the second they said was given by a man—Marshal MacMahon—who was himself a traitor to France. They did not seem to think it requisite that I should be put upon my defence. One of them was called forward by the rest, asked whether he could speak English, and whether he would know an Englishman by sight when he saw him. To both questions he replied in the affir-



mative. He was then told to speak to me in English, and to look at me, and say if I was an Englishman. He came up to me and muttered some gibberish, which contained a few words that might, by persons of a very strong imagination, be called English. I endeavoured to say a few words to him in my own tongue; but he stopped me by shouting out that I was a Prussian, that I spoke German, and did not understand a word of English.

This seemed quite enough for those who were trying me. After consulting together for a few minutes, one of them announced in a loud voice that I had been found guilty of being a Prussian spy, and that as such I was condemned to be shot. He then told me—looking at his watch and letting me look at mine—that I had a quarter of an hour given me to live, and, as a proof that he meant what he said, orders were given to twelve of the party to load their rifles, and two others were told off to give me the coup de grâce, in the event of my not being killed by the firing party. In a word, my lease of life seemed to be very near its termination, and I felt very certain that I had not more than the fifteen minutes the fellow named in which to live.

To analyse one's feelings or thoughts under such circumstances is impossible. For about five minutes, a third of the time that was left me, I felt utterly stunned, and kept wondering whether those I had left behind in England would ever learn what my fate had been. At last an idea, a sort of forlorn hope, came to me, and I lost no time before trying whether or not I could put it in execution. I called to one of the men, who seemed to be a leader amongst his fellows, and told him that I wished, before being shot, to see a priest, which was a privilege invariably granted to even the greatest culprits in France, and asked him to find out the curé, or parish priest, of the nearest village, and bring him to me. My idea was that by making this request, I should at any rate gain a little time, and that, if this priest did come to see me, it was possible, although I feared not very probable, he might have some influence with these men, and might get them to send me to some military post, where I should have justice done me. My request did not seem to annoy my judges in the least. On the contrary, they approved of it, and at once sent off a couple of messengers in different directions to look for this curé.

In the meantime my feelings and surroundings were by no means happy. It is true that since they had sentenced me to be shot, the men had—most fortunately, as it afterwards turned out—unbound my hands and feet. I was allowed to sit on the ground, close to a wall, a sentry with a loaded rifle being within a dozen yards of me, and due notice was given that if I attempted to get away this man had orders to shoot me at once. I was covered with dirt and dust, the result of having been knocked down more than once when I was made a prisoner. What the ultimate result of my reprieve might be, or what the priest could do if they found him, which seemed far from likely, was, I need hardly say, utterly uncertain. I kept on hoping for the very improbable best, but fearing in my heart that the more than probable worst would be my fate.

At last what turned out to be my guardian angel appeared. The messengers who had gone in search of the priest had been absent some little time, and my captors were beginning to grumble and say that it was time to finish the business, and shoot me off-hand, when all at once an old man, "a garde champêtre," appeared on the scene, his fowling-piece over his shoulder, and the red ribbon in the button-hole of his blouse, showing that he had served, and served with honour, in the French army. He asked what was the matter, and turning to me, enquired whether I really was an Englishman. I told him my story, and showed him the different documents I had by me, commencing with the pass given me by the chief of MacMahon's Staff. He read it carefully, and I could see by his face that he was convinced I was telling the truth. He then looked at my Foreign Office passport, but did not seem able to make out what it meant. All at once he left me, and I saw him go to where my carriage was, and whilst examining the vehicle and horses—the latter, most providentially, as it turned out, having never been unharnessed—he spoke a few words to the coachman. He then came back to where I was, asked me to show him again my different papers, and then, turning to some of the Franks Tireurs who were standing near, said in a loud voice, "Messieurs, you have made a great mistake. This person, pointing to me, is not a Prussian. He is an English officer of rank, who has come to France in order that he may see and admire how Frenchmen defend their country. Even now French officers are expecting him at

the headquarters of the army." And then, turning to me, he said, "Allons, Monsieur, en route; ne perdez pas un moment." With that he caught hold of my arm, hurried me away, and before my enemies had time, or anything like time, to realise what he was doing, we were not only inside the carriage, but were tearing along at a smart hand-gallop, on the road to Mouson. The anger and vexation of my captors may be imagined. They had not the means of pursuing us; but they fired several shots after us, one of which went through the crown of my billycock hat. However, I was saved; and if ever one man saved the life of another, that old garde-champêtre saved mine. When we arrived at Mouson I got five hundred francs (twenty pounds) on my letter of credit, and made it a present to the old fellow, who had behaved with such pluck, and who had certainly risked his life to save me. Had we been caught before we could reach the carriage, nothing could have saved him from suffering with me the death to which I had been condemned. And I may say with truth, that rarely, if ever, has a man had a more narrow escape from death than was my fate in this instance.

#### MEDIEVAL CHRISTMAS.

"IN 1440," writes Master Stubbs, the Puritan, "one Captain John Gladman, a man ever true and faithful to God and the King, and constantly sportive, made public sport with his neighbours at Christmas. He traversed the town on a horse as gaily caparisoned as himself, preceded by the Twelve Months, each dressed in character. After him crept the pale, attenuated figure of Lent, clothed in herring-skins, and mounted on a sorry horse, whose harness was covered with oyster-shells. A train fantastically garbed followed. Some were clothed as bears, apes, and wolves; others were tricked out in armour; a number appeared as harridans, with blackened faces and tattered clothes, and all kept up a promiscuous fight. Last of all marched several carts, whereon a number of fellows, dressed as old fools, sat upon nests, and pretended to hatch young fools."

Devout as our ancestors doubtless were, it is clear that they were at the same time very partial to some pretty robust fooling, and fooling of a sort which hardly matches with our modern ideas of propriety. But

the diversions of worthy Captain John Gladman, as thus described by good Master Stubbs, were mildness and propriety themselves when contrasted with other Christmas pastimes, of which we find full descriptions in the writings of Stubbs and other old writers. Outrageous, indeed, were some of the Christmas revels, as may be supposed when we learn that Henry the Third found it necessary to assent to a statute forbidding clergymen to play at dice in church on Christmas Day.

At that time, and for many years after, the Abbot of Unreason was the chief personage at Yule-tide sports: a permanent officer, bearing that title, being attached to the Court, to every cathedral and monastery, and to every baronial hall, and every municipality. Previous to the statute just alluded to, this individual was usually a monk, but afterwards seldom or never. At the Court, some knight or gentleman with a taste for writing very indifferent poetry, would be nominated by the monarch to fill the post. At baronial castles and gentlemen's halls it would be filled by some poor relation or other hanger-on; at the Universities a Master of Arts would be appointed by the heads of the colleges to regulate the games, and at the monasteries a lay brother would officiate. Among the common people it was different, and we cannot do better than let Master Stubbs speak for himself.

"All the wild heads of the parish flocking together, choose them a grand Captain of Mischief, whom they ennoble with the title of Lord of Misrule, and him they crown with great solemnity, and adopt for their King. This King, anointed, chooseth four-and-twenty, forty, three score, or a hundred like himself, to wait upon his lordly Majesty, and to guard his noble person. Then every one of these men he investeth with his liveries of green or yellow, or some other light, wanton colour; and, as though they were not gaudy enough, they bedeck themselves with scarves, ribbons, and laces, hung all over with gold rings, precious stones, and other jewels. This done, they tie about either leg twenty or forty bells, hold rich handkerchiefs in their hands, the same being sometimes laid across their shoulders and necks. Then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons, and other antics, together with their pipes, and thundering drummers to strike the devil's dance withal. Then march this heathenish company towards the church, their pipes piping, their

drums thundering, their bells jangling, their handkerchiefs fluttering about their heads like mad men, their hobby-horses and other monsters skirmishing among the throng; and in this sort they go to the church—though the minister be at prayer or preaching—dancing and singing with such a confused noise that no man can hear his own voice. And thus these terrestrial Furies spend the day. Then they have certain papers, wherein is painted some babelerie or other of imagery work, and these they call my Lord of Misrule's badges or cognisances. These they give to everyone that will give them money to maintain them in their heathenish devilry; and who will not show himself buxon to them and give them money, he shall be mocked and flouted shamefully; yea, and many times carried on a cowstaff and dived over head and ears in water, or otherwise most horribly abused."

That the revellers did not show much mercy to those whose behaviour did not meet with their approbation, we know from other sources besides Stubbs. And in Scotland it was just the same. On Christmas an apparitor attached to the Archiepiscopal Court of St. Andrew's, ventured with more pluck than prudence into the Castle of the Lord of Borthwick, for the purpose of serving that puissant but recusant noble with letters of excommunication. He suffered dearly for his folly. When he had discharged his duty, the apparitor was seized by the Abbot of Unreason and his crew, taken to the mill-stream, and thoroughly well ducked. He was then compelled to eat his letters of excommunication to the last shred, and dismissed with the warning that all similar documents "should gang the same gate."

Among other ceremonies and revels were those connected with the annual election of boy-bishops. Wherever there happened to be a choir it was requisite to have a school for the instruction and maintenance of the choristers, the more promising of whom were drafted off to the Universities to be prepared for the Church. With the hope of encouraging the lads in their studies the festival of the boy-bishop was promoted. On the Eve of Saint Nicholas—patron of schoolboys—the election took place, according to Strype, in much the same way as the election of a real Bishop. The boy-bishop then was pretty sure to be the good boy of the school; that is, if he were handsome and well shaped—qualifications even more essential than merit—as appears

from the registers of York Cathedral. Every choir was provided with robes for its use, which, as shown by the list preserved in the Northumberland Household Book, were hardly less magnificent than those of the Diocesan himself. They were provided by the founders and patrons, kept in repair at the expense of the parish, and renewed by donation and legacy.

Among the records of the churchwardens of Lambeth there are various entries concerning the repair of the boy-bishop's vestments; and Archbishop Rotherham bequeathed his mitre to the college which he founded at Rotherham in 1481. On Saint Nicholas Day the boy-bishop went to church in great state. In London he appears to have been mounted, for a statute of Old Saint Paul's directs one of the Canons of that Cathedral to provide him with a quiet horse. Due care, too, was taken to secure him an adequate following. The statutes of Old Saint Paul's School (1518) directs that every Childemas the pupils shall go to Saint Paul's to hear the "Childe" bishop's sermons. They add that, "after he be at high mass, each of them shall offer a penny to the 'childe' bishop." The boy-bishop went through all the ceremonies of the day, and even sang the Mass. This is denied, but there is abundance of proof. The records of Noyon say that he went through the whole service; the proclamation of Henry the Eighth, suppressing the boy-bishop, states that he said Mass; he was permitted to do so by the statutes of Winchester College; and he was ordered to do so by those of Eton.

Nobody, however, denies the fact of his preaching. "Suffer little children to come unto Me" was invariably the text; and the discourse—evidently as much a portion of the properties as the crozier or mitre—was repeated year after year, and was just a moral lecture to the children, and nothing more. After service, the boy-bishop and his followers, assisted by a hired train of mountebanks and minstrels, promenaded the district in search of contributions. They sang gay songs, and indulged in laughter-moving antics, and returned to a feast provided by the churchwardens.

Royal Christmas revels were got up on a very large scale, especially at the French Court. They were directed by an officer of the Court, entitled the King of the Ribalds, the same individual usually occupying also the very different position of executioner of Paris, and the two



offices being hereditary. Writes an old chronicler, describing one of these Christmas revels: "In one corner of the Palace (yard) there was a group of savage men, who made hideous grimaces, and combated comically. Beside them were three beautiful girls playing the part of sirens, which was a pretty sight, and singing songs and anthems." And not far off was a scaffold, whereon was built a mimic castle. This was assailed by one party, representing gallant Frenchmen, and defended by another arrayed—how may be conjectured—as stupid Englishmen. The former charged to the cry of "Montjoie Saint Denis!" and the latter shrieked their national slogan: "Rosbif! Goddam!" with all their might. The "God-dams," of course, were vanquished, and, to the delight of the spectators, "had all their throats cut"—in appearance only, we presume.

As men became more refined, so the Christmas spectacles improved in character. At the banquets it became the fashion to introduce "entremets," in the shape of spectacles, between the courses. Numerous and glowing are the accounts given of these by the old Chroniclers. At a royal banquet at Paris one of these entremets was a ship in full sail, which was drawn into the banquet hall. In the ship stood a knight in armour, leading a monstrous swan by a golden chain. There was a man inside the swan, and a "salvage" at each wing, whilst the knight himself was attended by pages, feathered like eagles.

Another entremet was a room that vented a procession among the guests. First trooped a crowd bearing torches; then followed a herald and two knights, laden with wreaths of flowers; and in the rear, on a white palfrey, trotted "Joy," a beautiful girl, with her hair hanging loose. The herald pronounced a speech; the knights distributed their wreaths; and Joy, climbing the table with her steed, rode up to the King and presented him with a kiss.

A third of these spectacles was a mountain bearing a castle. At the windows appeared the Four Seasons—young beauties scattering flowers—and, on the towers, singing an ode composed for the occasion, stood four youths habited as the Winds. The song ceased, the rock opened, and out sprang a griffin, shooting flames from his mouth and nostrils. He was followed by his keepers—six savage men—who danced a morrice. The Seasons and the Winds

then descended and danced another; afterwards all danced together. Finally, the actors resumed their places, and the mountain was rolled out. Another of these mountains bore a garden of wax flowers, tended by a poet, who gathered roses and presented them to the ladies with suitable rhymes. A third mountain had a fountain of scented water at each corner. Beside these fountains reclined four picturesque savages, and on the mountain top stood a pretty girl in the guise of a Fairy Queen. These characters descended, danced, and resumed their places; the fairy then raised her wand and struck the hill. Scores of little doors opened all over it, and out flew a multitude of sparrows. A second stroke released a crowd of rabbits, whose scurrying among the guests occasioned much laughter. A third brought forth a company of singing damsels; and a fourth let loose a troop of howling demons, who executed a number of acrobatic feats, and then ran off with the nymphs.

To the feast, with its intervals of entremets, would succeed the ballets. These were not merely a series of picturesque attitudes and graceful evolutions; they always told a story. One of them, performed by six ladies and twelve gentlemen, represented the carrying off of nymphs by satyrs.

"The fable was so admirably expressed," says an old writer who describes it, "that everyone could recognise by their gestures the feelings of the actors. Passion spoke in the movements of the satyrs, and embarrassment and terror in those of the nymphs. Strength and boldness characterised the former, shame and grief the latter. Nothing could be more vivid than the figures of this marvellous pantomime."

After the pantomime followed the masque. A group of gentlemen, in various grotesque disguises, would burst in amongst the guests, and cause universal uproar. Some of the scenes on these occasions are indescribable. The masquers rushed about, yelled, romped, annoyed the ladies, and made full use of the privilege of kissing under the mistletoe. There was much coarse fun, and plenty of drunkenness.

In provincial France, Christmas was celebrated more after the fashion of our Christmas mummers, with a mere shadow of whose performances we sometimes are favoured to-day in some out-of-the-way places. A procession would start from the door of the village church, would go round the village, and wind up where it started from. "In

front marched 'the curés and choristers—bearing crosses, banners, and relics, and occasionally singing anthems. After them came a young girl representing the Virgin, and a young man, rather lightly clad, and ornamented with a pair of wings, as the Angel Gabriel. Then followed a cardboard cock with a child inside. This was succeeded by a cow, a goat, four sheep, and an ass—or rather by models of these animals—each containing a boy. A fool mounted on a hobby-horse, and provided with bells and baubles, closed the array. Every now and then the procession halted. The angel recited the salutation, and kissed his companion, who said 'Fiat'—'So be it.' Then, after one another, the cock crew the words, 'Puer natus est nobis'—'Unto us a child is born;' the cow lowed 'Ubi? (Where?);' the sheep baaed—'Bethlem;' the ass brayed 'He-haw-mus'—to signify 'Eamus' (Let us go thither); and then the goat and the fool having nothing particular to add, the procession moved on, until the next halting-place was reached, when the performance was repeated."

Space will not allow us to describe many of the other feasts and observances which were held in various parts of Europe, all of which exhibit traces of being of Pagan origin. There was the Feast of Fools, for example. In this the clergy were the chief performers.

Then there was the Feast of the Ass, in honour of the animal which carried Balaam; and at Milan was annually observed the Feast of the Wise Men. On Twelfth Day, in the foremost of the ordinary Twelfth Day procession, marched three Kings, mounted on fine horses and most gorgeously robed. Numerous pages attended on them, and they were escorted by a large guard. A tall mast, supporting a golden star, was borne before them to the pillars of San Lorenzo—sixteen scathed and shattered columns, now supporting nothing, which greatly puzzle the antiquary. Here Herod, with his scribe and his wise men, awaited them, and the scene described by the Evangelists—with sundry adjuncts not noted in Scripture—was enacted. From the columns, still being preceded by the star, they adjourned to the ancient church of Eustorgia. There, in the neighbourhood of the sarcophagus which once contained the relics that Frederic Barbarossa carried off to bestow on Cologne, they found what they sought in the manger, and duly presented their gifts.

## LIVING OUT OF TINS.

WHEN the first timid ventures in the way of tinned provisions were made, and a few grocers' windows displayed to an incredulous world cheap boxes of Rock Island lobster, U.S. British salmon, and Canadian corned beef, little good was augured of the experiments. The English public mind, it was thought, was fastidious, and perhaps supercilious, as to innovations on the dietary of the nation. The very rich, or the very fashionable, must be supplied, of course, by talented purveyors, with every conceivable luxury in, or out, of season. But the comfortable classes, more numerous and more subdivided in England than elsewhere, were not so easily suited. Their incomes sufficed for a moderate, sometimes a liberal outlay. But game, poultry, and fish, in the hands of those closest of all corporations, our fishmongers and poulterers, are artificially dear. The prohibitive prices enforced for almost everything beyond the monotony of beef and mutton, led, in the course of time, to more or less laudable attempts to tickle the public palate at a cheaper rate. It was soon possible to buy things of expensive repute in small quantities, in shilling or eighteenpenny tins. A competitive contest ensued, in which, as often occurs, the battle was to the strong—in assertion. Persistent advertising, like the pounding of heavy artillery, produced its effect, and trash, with a tempting picture on the outside of the canister, drove out of the market wholesome comestibles less pushed and puffed.

It is due to the practical developement of modern science that provisions can be tinned at all. But for the all but perfect success with which atmospheric air, teeming with the minute germs and spores of animal and vegetable parasitic life, is excluded, we should be driven back to the rude salt junk of our forefathers. As it is, sea-fish, shrimps, and oysters get spoiled, nine times out of ten, in the process, and when extracted from their receptacles, prove fitter for the semi-putrid ngapé of the Burmese than for the taste of civilised man. And all substances, whether fish, flesh, or fowl, lose a percentage of their nutritive qualities in confinement, while acquiring, at the same time, an unusual degree of tenderness. Still, the need for food that can be long stored without perceptible decay is a real need, in these days

of sudden expeditions, civil and military, of colonising enterprise, and of frequent travel. Even in autumn manœuvres, when troops are hastily collected and encamped, it is found easier to provide every soldier's mess with four-pound tins of rough Australian mutton, than to enter into impromptu contracts with salesmen for the delivery of fresh meat. And on the march, or on a tropical shore, the convenience of an article of diet which defies any climate is sure to assert itself.

Tins are essentially in the grocer's department, and it is startling to note the strides, seven-leagued for the most part, that grocerdom has made in the direction of universal empire. Recent legislation has enabled the grocer to invade, on one hand, the dominions of the wine merchant and the licensed victualler, and, on the other, to harry the butcher, and to poach upon the poulterer. A very bitter feeling is believed to exist in the minds of some publicans, so-called, against the once harmless vendor of Smyrna figs and loaf sugar. Old Mr. Logwood, who has been in the wine trade, with him hereditary, for fifty-three years, can hardly restrain his temper as he passes the garish windows where preserved fruit, candies, ardent spirits, reputed champagne, and low-priced claret, offer themselves in tempting profusion. "Drugged rubbish," growls the angry old man, unjustly oblivious for the moment of what secrets of the prison-house his own trusted cellarman might tell, as to loading, and colouring, and fining, and mixing, as he glares at the hated shop-front of his despised rival. So does burly Mr. Bung, of the Anchor, or the Cordwainers' Arms, cast an evil eye at the fluids exposed for sale by the once respected cheesemonger at the corner shop. Giblets, the poulterer, is sardonic as to the merits of fifteenpenny chicken or turkey from Yankeeland; and sturdy Mr. Silverside scoffs contemptuously, as he converses with sympathetic cooks, at the tinned beef of America, and the "cagmag" mutton of our Australian fellow subjects.

The truth is, that the trade in tinned provisions, already a very extensive one, is a sort of cradled Hercules, trying with his baby hands to strangle the serpents of monopoly and routine. A somewhat fractious babe, and of a disposition slightly perverse, the giant infant may occasionally prove, but the uneasy alarm of his enemies, our domestic tradespeople, testifies to his potential merits. And we need his services,

for his foes are, unfortunately, our own. Brisk competition is the only argument to which our purveyors are accessible. It is asking too much to expect that these necessary but expensive persons should themselves apply the wholesome stimulus. Dog will not eat dog. Silverside, the butcher, cherishes no animosity against his brother of the steel and of the scales, rough and tough old Brisket. Brisket is the blue butcher, while, at election time, every round of beef and saddle of mutton in the better-stocked Silverside emporium gets garlanded with yellow ribbon, best sarsanet, from Snip and Taggart's round the corner. But the two worthies, though of hostile politics, have a mutual respect, and would scorn the untradesmanlike practice of underselling one another by a halfpenny a pound. But tanners, residing at a distance, have no corporate feeling of this kind. They can afford to be mean enough to beat the butcher hollow as to cost, and to press hard on his heels as regards quality.

A rough and ready substitute for the principle of natural selection does seem to rule the tinned provision mart. Dear goods are driven out by cheap ones. Modest excellence, now and then, is extinguished by the baleful glare of persistent puffery. Thus British salmon, lake trout, and burn trout, delicate and delicious to the taste, have had to succumb to their coarsest transatlantic cousins of the Salmonidæ, hooked or speared by Red Indians in some turbid river of the far West, and chopped up, to all appearance, with a tomahawk and scalping-knife. But then, to be sure, the tins are adorned with a gorgeous pictorial representation of the silvery salmon within, and are offered "with unusual advantages" to the retail trade. Labour is, indeed, too valuable an article in the wilder portions of America, and even in the rural parts of the Eastern States, for much care to be bestowed on cooking and packing. Hence poultry and turkeys, old and young, are roasted, cut up, and packed indiscriminately, in Maine, Pennsylvania, or New York, so that a pleasing uncertainty prevails as to the contents of any particular tin, howsoever labelled. Our American providers really have not time, or think they have not, to classify what they send us, just as in Cincinnati a hog is a hog, to be rapidly converted into bacon and pickled pork, with no regard to feeding or antecedents.

It is to be regretted that some especial productions of the New World should have



escaped the exporter; and among these may be mentioned the canvas-backed duck, now growing scarcer than of old; the large crayfish; and the almost unrivalled white-fish and noble bass of the Northern lakes. The so-called buffalo beef, too, has ceased to find its place in the market.

Some three years ago there was a constant demand among American invalids for the tinned bison-beef, more tender and more appetising, if less nourishing, than the flesh of domesticated animals will ever prove. There is a game flavour about this wild beef, while the hump in especial is in the very highest gastronomic repute. A difference of opinion, or a divergence of interests, between the jobbers who tinned the meat and the hunters who shot the animals, proved fatal. For six cents, or threepence a pound, it was worth while to convey the prime portions of the slain beasts on pack-horses to a distant railway station. But when a powerful corporation of middlemen determined to cut down the price to four cents a pound, the resentful hunter declined the twopence, shot down the buffalo herds for their hides alone, and left thousands of tons of good meat to rot on the prairies.

One of the earliest, as of the most successful, experiments ever made in potting or in tinning, was that which is for ever to be associated with the name of Baron Liebig. To wish to utilise the vast herds of cattle that live by browsing the tall grasses of the boundless Pampas was, of course, natural; and commendable, if not marvellous, was the skill with which the so-called Essence of Meat was manufactured amongst the wild Saladas of the Argentine States, to the amazement of the gaping Gauchos, who, for the first time, realised that it was not necessary to eat their staple beef, either in sun-dried strips or scorched before a gipsy fire of thorns. The oddest thing about the undertaking was the rapidity of its commercial success. The Baron's name is, indeed, a household word with myriads of cooks who never breathed a German word except his easily learned patronymic. Even the thrifty middle-class French, who cannot dine without soup, and with whom it is an article of faith to eat the meat of which their "potage" has been made, quickly became alive to the convenience of a stock that spared them the domestic duty of devouring insipid, greyish bouilli, garnished with carrots. New companies were formed, as a matter of course, to have a

finger in so profitable a pie, and to work patents fringing the rights of the Christopher Columbus of gravy. But the plains watered by the vast congeries of broad streams, which our ancestors knew as the Plata River, are still the El Dorado of those who would enrich themselves by transferring the extract of South American meat to European sauce-boats and soup-tureens.

The first and most systematic plan of tinning soups was, of course, English. Strictly speaking, soup, like salad, is one of our national institutions. Foreign "potages" and "consommés" are apt, even on gala occasions, and when decorated by high-sounding diplomatic names, to be mere broth, flavoured with crayfish or herbs, and mushrooms and burnt butter. And it is odd to note, considering our own meek habit of self-depreciation in culinary matters, how respectfully the most renowned of French cookery books speak of our English cuisine, of our rich soups and piquant sauces and elaborate entrées. Their tanners have done us the more dubious honour of imitating our productions, and there are pale copies sold everywhere, from Marseilles to Antwerp, of wholesome exports bearing the stamp of famous British firms.

In original enterprise, as regards this department of trade, the French have done but little, and the Germans less. In these days of trichinosis it needs a bold man to venture upon a German sausage. Hamburg, like Cherbourg, offers a few lobsters potted whole, and some beef as doubtful in parentage as its fiery sherry. French sardines, like French oysters, have declined in quality; their preserved peas might be pellets of shot; their conserved mushrooms pickled leather; and only in tinned tunny do they remain unapproachable. But the tunny of the Mediterranean, though good of its kind, is too oily a fish to please our palates as it did those of the Athenians of the time of Aristophanes.

Canada is far from being backward in the race of commercial competition. She sends us ox tongues of unsurpassed excellence, capital corned beef, and hams of sterling quality. If her republican neighbours outstrip her as to tomatoes and peaches, she is at least conscientious with respect to her streaky bacon and her lobsters. As for exports of tinned oysters and shrimps, they may be classed with the razors rhymingly chronicled by Gay, as made to sell and not to shave. And, indeed, sea-

fish, as well as the minor crustaceans, lend themselves very ill to any attempt at preservation. The salmon tribe can bear what cod, turbot, sole, and haddock, appear unable to endure.

Singularly enough, the smallest and most relatively populous of West European countries comes prominently to the front when it is a question of tinned provisions. There are so many mouths to feed in busy, frugal Belgium—the land in which, as we are authoritatively told in Government reports, the labourer works and fares harder than anywhere else in Christendom—that it might seem impossible to find spare food to pack away in tins. Yet a glance at the long catalogues of the Brussels purveyors of such commodities gives ample proof to the contrary. The raw material is dear with them, of course. They cannot afford, as American shippers can, to sell a preserved chicken (which may possibly turn out to be the fourth of a turkey), at a price which N. P. Willis would certainly have described as “ridiculously trifling.” But, then, their chicken will be whole, a rice-fattened Antwerp fowl, cooked to a turn. Their calf’s head “en tortue” is no mere mock-turtle soup, but an admirable counterfeited of the old calipash and calipee, once dear to civic epicures. Their tinned sweetbreads are a little below the London standard in price, but they are capitally cooked, and in fine condition. Wild fowl and partridges; woodcock and snipe; the rabbit dressed in all manner of ways; truffles; galantines; the hare, variously presented; the thrush and the roebuck; swell their bill of fare. What these Flemish folks have to sell is not dear, but neither is it cheap enough to tempt the anxious-eyed mother of a household where there are hungry boys to feed, and a small income to be eked out. The Belgian merchandise, when it is not a mere plagiary on something that is better in England, is apt to be dainty of its kind, but to partake of the nature of a luxury.

What is evidently wanted, for the due development of the tinning trade, and for the benefit of customers, is a proper adjustment between the vast supplies of food in distant parts of the world, and the many hungry mouths that must be supplied nearer home. That the butcher and the poulterer will become obsolete, and all mankind live out of tins, is, of course, a sheer impossibility. The rich, and the actual poor, will always depend on local middlemen who understand their

requirements. Tripe, and trotters, and fried fish, and saveloys, will continue to please Mr. Whelks, whose only difficulty is to find the coin wherewith to pay for these creature-comforts. And Lord Octavius Tomnoddy will always be satisfied with Scilly peas, Jersey butter, and Sussex spring chickens, with Dartmoor mutton and Leicester beef. It is for middling incomes, for those who are neither of the class of Mr. Whelks, nor are wafted by fortune, as by Aladdin’s Slave of the Lamp, high above mundane considerations of common-place pounds, shillings, and pence, that the provider of tinned provisions ought to work. There is endless beef in the southernmost part of the Atlantic side of the South American Continent. Australia still musters many sheep. The United States, or, at least, their Western components and territorial hem, could feed more cattle and turkeys than swarming Europe can consume. But the distances are great, the meat often lean and stringy, the “gobblers” the worse for lack of care and maize-flour, and nothing prospering as it ought to do, for want of skilled superintendence. What is really wanted is a grasp of the situation, to bring cheap nutriment and eager purchasers together, for the benefit of both.

## ALL ON ONE SIDE.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE astronomy lessons came to pass despite the ill omen. The old Pastor certainly gave them no encouragement; but, on the other hand, the schoolmaster was pleased at the distinction bestowed on his clever daughter. Hermann Holzinger was not so sure that he appreciated this honour for his future wife. If she had been going to remain a teacher, well and good; but since she was not, since they were to be married in March, he felt dimly that astronomy was a little irrelevant. Once or twice Hedwig asked him if he would not join her in her new study, and once he actually did make the effort to appear at four o’clock in the Pastor’s little sitting-room, where, two or three times a week, Sartorius used to bring his books and diagrams. But Hermann did not get interested. Hedwig had already learnt something, and the lecturer did not bring

his explanations down to the level of the blank ignorance of his second hearer.

"We must not bore your good Hermann, Fräulein Hedwig," Sartorius said afterwards; "I am sure he doesn't care a pin for astronomy. He only came for your sake; and, you see, personal feelings are not the least help towards understanding scientific subjects."

"I suppose not," said Hedwig.

"I should fancy it all depends," said the old Pastor.

"Depends on what?" asked Max.

"On where the personal feeling came in," said the Pastor.

To which the other vouchsafed no reply.

Of course astronomy could not be studied without a telescope; and, as Hedwig could not constantly make use of the observatory at Horst, her teacher arranged a smaller telescope in the belfry of the crooked steeple, up which every now and then they climbed to use it, under the escort of the schoolmaster, though once it happened that they went alone.

It was on a certain November evening—when the lessons had already lasted a couple of months, and when Hedwig had begun scarcely to remember a time when she did not reckon her days by the coming and going of these pleasant hours whose secret she had not yet guessed—that the schoolmaster chanced to be busy, therefore Hedwig and Sartorius had gone into their improvised observatory without him.

"We must make the best possible use of to-night," said Max, as he adjusted the telescope, "for I have been called suddenly away. This will be our last lesson in astronomy."

"What do you say?" asked Hedwig, feeling as if her very heart had turned pale.

"I said that unfortunately this must be our last lesson," he answered, "for I am called away to New York. I have got this thing fixed on the right star now. What a nuisance a makeshift is when time presses! However, this has done us very good service."

"To New York!" repeated Hedwig.

"And when shall you come back?"

"I have no idea; my absences are always of uncertain length, but this must not put an end to your studies. I shall leave you the telescope, and all the books and things we have used to keep you from forgetting."

"Forgetting!" exclaimed Hedwig.

"What do you take me for? How could

I forget? You don't know how sorry I am you are going away."

Was that queer muffled sound her own voice, or were some cruel fingers on her throat choking her? Was the crooked steeple swaying to and fro? Were all the bright stars rushing in wild confusion of burning lines across the sky? Was the whole world come to an end, and had she to live on alone in chaos? What had she learnt besides astronomy in the last few months, that made her feel so unlike herself now?

"I'm glad you're sorry," Sartorius said quietly, "it is the best assurance you have really enjoyed what you have been learning."

"Glad I am sorry!" cried the girl; "oh, don't—don't say you are glad I'm sorry!"

"You don't understand me," returned Sartorius; "you see we men are weak-minded enough to be open to flattery. It flatters me to hear that my absence can cause a regret, however slight. I should not have presumed to hope for so much. Now, will you take a look at Saturn and his rings?"

He laid his hand on her arm as he spoke, to draw her forward. His touch thrilled through her as it had never done before. He placed her before the telescope carefully.

"Now tell me what you see?" he asked.

The spell of his touch was still on her. She could not have told whether she was looking at stars through a telescope, or whether she had floated away to starland itself.

"Tell me what you see," he repeated.

"I can see nothing at all," she answered tremulously.

"How is that?" he asked, bending down beside her till she felt his breath on her hands, "it was all right a minute ago."

"It is my fault," she replied hastily.

"My eyes ache to-night."

She turned from the telescope towards him. A wild temptation came over her to throw herself into his arms; to beg him not to go away; to see if he would press her to him, in just one passionate embrace.

By the light of the little lamp they had brought she looked into his eyes; there was no response there to her unspoken appeal; for answer she seemed to catch a glimpse of a long cheerless future close upon her. Poor Hedwig! the moment of her awakening had come; she knew in what one thing her happiness was bound



up. She knew, too, that her whole duty would be the struggle to do without it; that she had nothing more to look forward to hopefully when she should have gone down the winding belfry-stairs.

"You don't know when you are coming back?" she said. She fancied she had only thought the words she uttered.

"Not till the spring; then I shall come and pay you your wedding visit. I hope you will be very happy. Do you think I had better put the telescope away?" he went on quietly after a pause, "or will you have another try before we go?"

The calm of his manner stung Hedwig like a scourge. If he would only have said that he was sorry to leave her!

"I think I will not try again," she said. "Let us go."

"Mind the stairs," he said. "Lay your hand on my shoulder, as I go first."

So they went down.

"I am going to say good-bye to the Menzels," said Sartorius, as he reached the door. "Are you coming there also?"

"No," answered Hedwig tremulously, "I am going home at once."

She held out her hand to him.

"How cold you are!" he said, as he took it; then he took the other, and held them both in a gentle clasp. "I suppose this is the last time I shall see you as Hedwig Thorbecke. If I am back in time, you must let me send you some flowers for your wedding."

She did not speak, and he put her silence down to maidenly shyness.

"Herr Menzel will let me know when you want them, and then you can remember me on your wedding-day."

"I shall remember you without the help of flowers," said Hedwig; again she had only meant to think the words.

"Thank you," he replied; but he, on his part, made no promise, and gave no assurance. "Good-bye."

Once more the terrible impulse came to Hedwig to throw her arms around him, and to defy the whole world.

For a moment her fingers tightened convulsively round his, then she said:

"Leben Sie wohl, Herr Doctor," and turned away.

Hermann was sitting with her father when she came in. She could feel that she was pale to the lips, but the little room was not very brightly lighted.

"The star-gazing is soon over this evening," said the schoolmaster. "I expect you found it cold in the belfry."

"Very cold," said Hedwig.

Hermann crossed the room and sat down beside her. "You are shivering, my darling," he said. "You must not go up the tower again when it is so cold. At least, I hope you won't."

"No," replied the girl wearily, "I shan't go again. Dr. Sartorius is going away to-morrow."

"Going away?" echoed Hermann; his voice sounded as if the news were no blow to him.

"Well, he has been here nearly half a year," said the schoolmaster. "He never stops longer. If he married, perhaps he might settle at Horst. It would be a good thing for him and for Battingen."

"Ah! he doesn't know how to be happy, does he, Hedwig?" whispered Hermann softly, and he laid his hand on Hedwig's as he spoke.

Her first impulse was to draw it away, his touch seemed a mockery. "It is not so easy to judge of other people's happiness, Hermann. I don't know why you fancy that Dr. Sartorius is unhappy."

"I don't say he is unhappy, my sweet; I only say he has missed the best happiness of life." And Hermann, regardless of the old schoolmaster, drew Hedwig to him and pressed a kiss on her cheek.

#### CHAPTER V.

CHRISTMAS came and went, and the new year began. Hedwig had been remarkably pale and quiet for some time; she said she had caught a chill, which Hermann laid to the charge of her last astronomy lesson. She did not contradict him; she did not care to what her languor was attributed, so long as it availed to delay her wedding. Since Sartorius's departure she had thought of little else but of him; she had patiently recalled every word he had spoken to her—every look of his eyes, every touch of his hand, every little tenderness of his manner; her only pleasure was in living over again the time they had spent together. "Did he try to make me love him?" she asked herself continually, "or did I love him unwooded? Ah, he must have loved me a little—just a little, or I could never love him so very, very greatly."

When she thought of Hermann, it was with a pity as deep as that which she felt for herself. Of the future she did not dare to think at all. That her engagement must be broken off she did not doubt, and yet it was terrible to

think of breaking it. Delay was just one degree less horrible than to take the decisive step. And so Hedwig's new year had begun while the snow lay thick and white, frozen hard over the hills and along the forest paths.

One day, early in January, Hedwig was sitting with her godmother, sewing.

"Fancy," said the old lady. "Fancy, Hedwig, Dr. Sartorius is coming back again. My husband heard from him this morning."

"Coming back!" exclaimed Hedwig; "to Horst?"

"Yes, to Horst. It is a much shorter absence than he intended; there must be some important reason for his return."

Coming back! The thought sent the blood dancing through the girl's veins as it had not done for weeks. Could it be that he wanted to see her?

"He writes in the best of spirits," continued the old lady; "so it is nothing disagreeable which is hurrying him back; and, by-the-way, he sends you a greeting."

Hedwig got up; the room seemed too small for her feelings.

"Thank you, godmother," she said. "Talking of letters reminds me of one I must write. I must run away home."

The letter took a long time. She tore it up many times before it was written to her satisfaction. When it was at last finished, she read it aloud to herself to judge of the full effect of the words.

"Dear Hermann," it ran, "I have known now, for some time, that I must tell you what has been troubling me lately, and making me look ill. It is, that I find I do not love you in the way I thought I did; not enough to make you happy. Our marriage is, therefore, impossible. Forgive me for the pain this will cause you. I would so gladly have spared it you if I could. You must forget me, Hermann; only, I beg of you, do not think I have changed. I have not. I made a dreadful mistake last summer when I promised to marry you."

"Yours sincerely,

"HEDWIG."

She folded and addressed it, and went out to put it in the post; but the walk through the snowy streets chilled her resolution.

"I dare not," she thought; "it will break his heart. He will feel as I have felt all these weeks. I will go on to the hills and think it all over once again."

So she passed by the post, and went on until the red-roofed town lay behind and

below her. The snow was crisp beneath her feet, and the sky was clear above her head. It seemed to her the crispest, brightest winter day she had ever known. The solitude of the hills had never seemed more delicious; nor had the fine, sharp crests of the pines against the pale sky ever struck her as so beautiful. When she paused to look behind her, the purple slates and scarlet tiles of the old town stood out in gorgeous contrast with the snow that partially hid them. Round the crooked steeple the jackdaws wheeled in merry circles. Beyond the town, beyond the frozen river, rose the dark rocks, and the dark pines, bearing white wreaths on their long, outstretched limbs; and there stood Horst, with the sunlight flashing back from the windows that looked on to the terrace. Everything was touched with glory; the brightness and transparency overpowered her. It was useless for her to try and fix her thoughts on Hermann. In the exultation of hope that forced itself upon her, she could not face the perplexity of reasoning out again the full consequences of her sad mistake. She began to regret that she had not posted her letter at once. She tried to feel sad for his sake, but she could not. Even the bitterness of her parting with Sartorius, and all she had suffered since, was like a dream from which she was now awakening. She could remember nothing so clearly as the tenderness of his manner to her, and the fact that he had thought of her in his absence.

"I don't care how it ends," she thought; "it must end some day—somehow. I love him, that is enough;" and then, loud and clear under the lonely evening sky she said, "My darling Max, I love you."

Then, with drooping eyes and a crimson blush on her cheeks and brow, as if she feared the very silence would betray her secret, she turned again, and walked on swiftly uphill towards the forest.

How would it be when they met again? Her whole being thrilled, as she thought that once more her hand would lie in the clasp of his, that once more his eyes would look down into hers. Life, so dim only yesterday, seemed to contain an endless vista of hope—hope that she dared not formulate, and yet which insisted on taking definite form, until, in fancy, she heard his voice speaking words of passion, and felt his arms round her, his lips pressed to hers. Faster and faster the blood coursed through her veins, faster and faster came the breath from her parted lips. Her heart

beat so tumultuously, that she could hear it above the fall of her footsteps and the sighing of the pine-trees. The ground seemed to fly beneath the buoyancy of her tread.

Then a strange tremulousness came over her, her lips grew cold and dry, her eyes burned like fire, the trees bent down their heavy arms to crush her, and the white pall of snow rose up to clasp her round.

The wind shrieked around her in horror. She tried to raise her hand to her head, but it was heavy and numb.

"I must go home," she said to herself; "I have walked a long way, and it is getting dusk."

Yet, even as she said it, a physical impulse too strong to be overcome made her seat herself on the ground, and rest her head against a tree. The rough bark seemed to throb and glow in response to her throbbing brain. Joy was harder to live through than sorrow. If she could only feel a little calmer, all would be well. She stretched herself out on the ground, and pressed her cheek against the cold whiteness of the snow. Yet still her thoughts grew more and more confused. There were many voices around her, voices she could not distinguish called her name on every side; they floated by her, and came back and floated away again. She would have raised herself to answer; but her head was so heavy that she could not lift it, and her knees were so weak that she could not straighten them. Then the voices ceased, and there was only the wind among the pines. The wind often rose after sunset, and then they rang the bell in the crooked steeple, so that any who had lost their way among the snow-covered woodland paths might hear the friendly sound, and steer by it towards home. The bell must be ringing now. She wondered if anyone was lost in the forest to-night. Yes, there was a poor girl, whose heart had been very sick and sore, and who had watched and wept until she had not strength enough to bear good news. This poor creature was lying on the snow now, Hedwig knew, with her eyes closed, so that she could not see how the bright stars were looking down on her. Only the bell would ring in vain for her, for she had been fickle and cruel, and she wanted to break a good man's heart.

A week later, as Herr Pastor Menzel sat sadly in his parlour by the tall stove, there came a visitor. It was Dr. Sartorius, with

a radiant face. His eyes were so full of joy that he did not see how pale and woe-begone the old man looked.

"You did not expect me so soon?" he said, seating himself opposite the Pastor. "I did not intend either to have come till much later."

"What does it mean then?" asked the other. "Have you come to stay long?"

"Not this time," replied Sartorius. "The fact is—I am about to follow your often-repeated counsel—I have come back to Horst for the last time alone. I have met my fate at last—I am going to put Horst ready for my bride."

"Heaven bless you, my boy!" said the old man, "may you have much happiness! Tell me about your bride."

"I must not begin talking of her now," smiled Max; "the subject is inexhaustible. But I will not spare you; I will only defer the list of her perfections, and how I won her, till a little later. Just now I must pay another visit; I have brought your goddaughter a wedding present—do you think I may take it to her in person?"

The old man shook his head sadly.

"You have not heard the dreadful trouble that has befallen us. You have come to the house of mourning. Hedwig's marriage will never be. She had been looking pale for some time, and she had grown thin and languid, but we did not suppose her to be ill—we shall never know now whether she was ill or not. She went alone one afternoon on to the hills behind the town. She did not come home that night. The next day she was found at the edge of the forest, face downward in the snow. She had been frozen to death."

Then the old Pastor's forced calmness gave way and he sobbed aloud. But that was not the reason why he did not tell Sartorius of the letter which had been found in Hedwig's possession, and which had added a terrible bitterness to their grief.

Max Sartorius brought home an American bride in April, just as the primroses which Hermann had planted on Hedwig's grave were coming into bloom.

Years after Hermann found another love; but, though he had long forgiven Hedwig, he never forgot her; and if ever he keeps his golden wedding-day, the sweetest memory he will recall from the past will be that other golden wedding-day when in the forest he held his first love to his breast, and promised to love her for ever.

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## THE MERRY MAIDS OF WINDSOR.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

AUTHOR OF "LADY LOVELACE," "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC.

### CHAPTER I. PLOT.

"The world—that is, of course, Windsor—would be a tolerable place of abode if it were not for the——"

"Garrison," interrupted a masculine voice.

"Old maids," finished the feminine one. "Cousin Geoffrey," it added, after a moment's pause, "I thought you were in a miserable frame of mind when we set off for our walk, and now I am sure of it. I'm sorry I let you come out with me this morning."

"Ah, if you hadn't, you wouldn't have got out at all to-day. Aunt Mary is labelling creation—in other words, re-ticketing her geological cabinet; Aunt Rosie is deep in housekeeping books, an occupation from which she does not like to be disturbed to take volatile young nieces out for morning walks!"

"Volatile! as if anyone within our four walls had a chance of being anything so delightful. There's Philippa, even, grown meek and quiet as any saint, never says a sharp word, spends all her time reading Thomas à Kempis or Epps on Homœopathy. I never see her but what she has either a manual of devotion or a homœopathic instruction-book in her hand."

"Your sister is going to marry a parson. She is qualifying betimes."

"I should think it was betimes! Aunt Mary says she won't hear of her getting married till she's twenty-one—that's two years hence. It's altogether ridiculous. Why, if I were going to settle down as a parson's wife in two years' time, I should want all the fun I could get beforehand. A dance every other night at least; the theatre—well, twice a week; boating or tennis every afternoon——"

"Ah, don't you want all that now?" interrupted Cousin Geoffrey.

"And as for Thomas à Kempis and Epps, I'd put them behind the fire!"

"Make martyrs of them in company. The truth of it is, Nellie"—here Cousin Geoffrey laid his hand on his companion's arm—"the world is upside down, things are all crooked. Now let us—you and I—try and set them straight. The sun is scorching. Come and sit down a minute under this big elm—we're not due at home for another half-hour—and let's discuss things generally."

These two strolling in leisurely fashion down the Long Walk in Windsor Park, were Geoffrey Fenwick and his young cousin Ellinor.

The Fenwicks had once been a large family, now they were reduced to the small number of six: the two maiden aunts, Aunt Mary and Aunt Rosie already referred to; two twin orphan nieces, Philippa and Ellinor, who had grown up

under the tutelage of the said maiden aunts; and Cousin Geoffrey, so dubbed to distinguish him from his father, Uncle Geoffrey, still living.

Cousin Geoffrey was not a man one runs against every day in a crowd. In making him Nature had seemed, somehow, to be at a loss for a type, and so had constructed him out of the odds and ends in her workshop. She had given him the dreamy blue eyes of a poet, overshadowed by the sandy brown curls of a Scotch shepherd; hollow cheeks; a square jaw, in company with a configuration of head that would have driven a believer in Gall or Spurzheim frantic from the contradictoriness of the organs it developed. In figure he was tall and inclined to stoop; his voice was melancholy, his conversation spasmodic and jerky.

It might have seemed, to those who took the trouble to think on the matter, that Cousin Geoffrey had, somehow, caught scent of Nature's whimsicalities in his creation, and had chosen to emphasise them in his career. As a boy at Eton he had shunned football for philosophy; as a man at Oxford he had taken honours in nothing but private theatricals; and subsequently he had chosen for himself a tutor, and had read himself light-headed with mathematics. From that period he had fulfilled with more or less distinction the career of the proverbial rolling-stone, and had somehow contrived to earn for himself among his friends a very fair reputation for extravagance in matters of theory, and practical common-sense in matters of fact. It would have tested the powers of a logician of the first order to reconcile his theories with his practice. Foremost among these theories was the one that Nature in no circumstances was to be contradicted or thwarted. By inference, therefore, young people knew better than their elders what was good for them in the way of education or amusement. This notion of his, naturally enough, was uppermost in Nellie's thoughts as she seated herself beside him under the big tree. She had nothing particularly interesting to do that morning, so she made up her mind to give him a patient hearing—say to the extent of ten minutes—after she had said all she had to say on the generally upside-down condition of things.

"There could be no doubt about it, Nellie was a chatterbox. She hadn't yet half done with Philippa's delinquencies.

"I don't believe Paul would be half so

prim if Philippa would only let him alone. All yesterday afternoon we were playing tennis together, he and I, and he was as full of fun as could be. Then out came Philippa to remind him of the boot-club, or the choir practice, or some nonsense or other. And he put down his racquet and pulled a long face immediately, said it was all my fault, and he really didn't know how the afternoon had gone."

Cousin Geoffrey, looking round at his companion seated beside him in the glancing, dancing sunlight, could easily understand how Paul or any other young man of eight-and-twenty, playing tennis with her on a summer's afternoon, wouldn't "really know how time had gone" till the sun began to set. Yet Nellie Fenwick was no Juno, but simply a tall, slender, brown-eyed, brown-haired English maiden, with a delicate pink-and-white complexion, which a black frock and hat set off to the best advantage.

He did not put his thoughts into words, however. All he said was, "Poor Philippa!"

"Poor Philippa! Poor me, you mean! Philippa never gets half the scoldings I do. Philippa may go out with Paul any afternoon she likes, and Aunt Mary never says a word to her. But, oh, the hurricane that set in the other day because Captain Archer wanted to drive me over to——"

"Archer wanted to drive you!"

"Oh, there! Are you going to take a leaf out of Aunt Mary's book! I thought you were meaning to talk over things with me quietly and reasonably——"

"Reasonably!"

"Yes; how else could I talk? Cousin Geoffrey, do have a little common-sense. I want to prove to you——"

"Oh, if you're going to prove anything, it's you who are going to take the leaf out of Aunt Mary's book. I can't stand it. Let's go in at once."

"How aggravating you are! Well, what I wanted to say—if you object to have anything proved to you—was that I can't stand it any longer, and if you can't get me asked away somewhere on a long, long visit where I can have a little fun, I shall grow desperate, and——"

"Don't. Wouldn't it do as well to get the aunts asked away on a long visit?"

"Oh, that would be heavenly! Philippa and I would keep house—I could manage Philippa without the aunts—and we would have such delicious boating-parties, tennis-parties, suppers afterwards—fancy the

suppers we would have out on the lawn in the dusk!"

"Ah, I can fancy them!"

"And dances, and drives, and rides——"

"And Archers, and dog-carts——"

"Cousin Geoffrey!" And here Nellie blushed as pretty a pink as the wild roses she had pinned with such coquettish effect in the collar of her dress. "It's nonsense your implying that I'm a flirt. I'm not the least bit in the world one. What I might be if I had a chance——"

"What, indeed!"

"I couldn't say. But with my lack of opportunity——"

"Opportunity only!"

"I'm no more a flirt than Aunt Mary herself, and not half such a flirt as Aunt Rosie could be with a little trying. She bought another new opera-hood yesterday—that's about the twenty-first this year. She must spend all her time trying them on in her own room on the sly. Perhaps someone one day when she was a girl—ages upon ages ago, of course—must have told her she looked pretty in her opera-hood, and she can't forget it, and tries to keep up the illusion that she's still worth looking at!"

"Poor mediæval Aunt Rosie! Not five-and-thirty yet!"

"Well, five-and-thirty is mediæval, whatever you may say; it's exactly middle-age—no one expects to live beyond seventy."

"They do it without expecting, sometimes."

"People do all sorts of dreadful things sometimes. They even marry at—— Oh, Cousin Geoffrey, I've got an idea!" Here Nellie, with a great start, sprang off her seat and stood facing her cousin.

"Ah, one! Keep it, make much of it," replied Cousin Geoffrey, sitting still and looking up at her.

"Oh, glorious! Oh, the fun! I can see myself in the very thick of it all."

"Let me see you in the very thick of it too!"

"You shall. I scarcely know how to tell you. Oh, make haste, get up and come home. I want to begin at once—this very minute."

"By all means. This very minute." And Cousin Geoffrey jumped to his feet, and set off at such a very rapid pace that Nellie had to trot to keep up with him, and soon came to a full stop, vowing that she hadn't breath to go another step, and wouldn't have any left for conversation for a whole year to come.

Upon which Cousin Geoffrey pulled up immediately, declaring that such a consideration would influence him mightily.

"It was so ridiculous," she panted, "just when I was beginning to explain to you what my idea was. I can tell you in one word what I want to do."

"In one word?"

"Well, in half-a-dozen then. It's this: I want the girls, just for once in a way, to turn the tables on the old maids, and instead of their arranging our love-affairs and marrying us off, I want to arrange theirs for them and marry them."

"No; you'll want bachelors, not girls, to do that. The thing will be to find them—the bachelors, I mean."

"Oh, I'll find them fast enough. I have it all in my mind, from the very first to the very last. There are always in every place a number of needy bachelors on the look-out for moneyed brides——"

"Archers, for instance," murmured Cousin Geoffrey.

"Cousin Geoffrey, how dare you?" and Nellie's face flushed an angry, not a pretty red now. "I've a great mind to leave off telling you my plan. I would, only I want your help in it."

"I'll help you, never fear," answered Cousin Geoffrey, with never so much as a twinkle in his eye.

"Well, what I mean to do is simply this—set a report going that Aunt Mary has come in for ever so much money, thousands. Aunt Rosie I sha'n't trouble about marrying off; without Aunt Mary, Philippa and I would have no trouble with her. It can easily be managed. You know dear Uncle Edward—here she glanced at her black frock—"left me a thousand pounds the other day, and Aunt Mary a hundred pounds to buy a mourning-ring. Well, I'm just going to reverse the cases, make people think it was the young Miss Fenwick who had the hundred pounds, and the old Miss Fenwick who had the thousand, only I shall turn it into ten or twenty thousand, at the very least."

"Purely as a matter of experiment, do you mind starting the report at a thousand pounds? It will grow into ten thousand before it gets to the other end of the town, and be swollen into twenty by the time it comes back to us."

"Oh, then I'll make a point of starting it at ten thousand; it will be fifty thousand before it gets to the end of the town, and a hundred thousand on its way back. Isn't that at the same rate of increase?"



Cousin Geoffrey made a wry face at her. "Oh, well; it's near enough, at any rate. What I want is that she shall be credited with a good lump sum in ready money. I know exactly how to do it. There are three capital centres for gossip in the town: one is the St. George's Royal United Service Club; the second, the Zenana working parties; the third, Lady Sowerby's drawing-room. The first I'll get at through Captain Archer, the second through Philippa, and the third I will supply myself direct."

"Will Philippa aid and abet?"

"She will be an unconscious instrument in my hands. I shall tell her in confidence I am positive Aunt Mary had ever so much more money left her the other day than she told us, that I'm sure she kept it to herself for fear we should worry for a bigger dress-allowance or a pony-carriage all to ourselves. And I shall suggest to her that she shall put it into the head of the secretary of the Zenana Working Club to ask Aunt Mary for a bigger subscription."

"Do you suppose that Aunt Mary will stand mute, and let all these reports pass uncontradicted?"

"I suppose Aunt Mary standing mute! Good gracious! I can suppose her doing anything sooner than that! But the fun of it all will be, that the faster she contradicts the reports the faster I shall keep them stirring. I shall explain to everyone she's so horribly afraid of the men making love to her for her money, that she pretends she hasn't had any legacy but the hundred pounds that came to me the other day."

"Never mind about the fibs you'll have to tell. They won't count, will they?"

"Oh, if you call that fibbing!"

"And what do you suppose will be the end of your little extravaganza, may I ask?"

"The end! Oh, I don't care two straws how it all ends; it's the middle that'll be the fun of the thing. Seeing the men buzzing about the house making love to Aunt Mary! I can prophesy exactly who they'll be. Aunt Mary brightening up and flirting shamefully, while the girls look on reprovingly!"

"Aunt Mary flirting!"

"One never knows what an old maid can do till a chance is given her. You wait and watch the fun—that's all."

"Suppose your sport should be death to someone? In other words, supposing Aunt Mary should happen to give her heart to

one of the men making love to her for her money, what then?"

"A heart to give at forty-five!"

"Aunt Mary is not forty-five. She is a year younger than I am, and I was only forty-four last birthday."

"Well, then, she is forty-three and three-quarters, and all I can say is if a person at forty-three and three-quarters has a heart to give; and bestows it on a man who wants money, not heart; she deserves to suffer for her pains."

"That might apply to other people who are something under forty-three and three-quarters."

"Why, of course it might. I haven't a scrap of pity for anyone who hasn't the sense to find out which a man wants—heart or money. Not a scrap! it's only conceit that blinds them."

"Quite so. Not a scrap. It is only conceit that blinds them," assented Cousin Geoffrey, a curious expression passing over his thin face. "Here we are at home. There's Philippa reading in the garden. I suppose you'll set your ball rolling at once. I shall go in and have a chat with the mediæval aunts."

While they had been talking they had turned the corner of one of those pleasant bye-roads with which Windsor abounds. It was lined with old lime-trees, behind which sheltered large, detached, stone-built villas surrounded with big, shady gardens. The one at whose gate the two entered was a little larger and less regularly built than the others, and its stone façade was all but hidden from view by a glorious mass of intertwining purple wistaria and yellow climbing rose. The front door was open; it immediately faced the back entrance, also wide open. Through it was laid bare a pretty vista of garden, a big mulberry-tree in the centre of a lawn, beneath which on a wicker chair sat Nellie's twin counterpart, with a big, solid-looking volume in her hand.

"Good-bye, Cousin Geoffrey; I wish you a pleasant morning," was Nellie's rejoinder, as she made straight for the mulberry-tree and the wicker seat.

Philippa was evidently in a brown study. She barely lifted her eyes at Nellie's approach.

Nellie went round the tree and peeped over her shoulder.

"'Belladonna,'" she read aloud, "'is especially adapted to persons whose brains are in a state of great functional activity, to those of amiable dispositions inclined to

become fat.' Oh, Philippa, the very thing that would suit me! I'm sure the man who wrote that must have had me in his eye. Have you any of the dear little sugar-balls handy?"

But Philippa was not inclined for fun, She shut up her "Epps" emphatically. "I do so wish you would be serious sometimes, Nellie," she said crossly. "You seem to think that girls were only sent into the world for fun and flirtation."

"Why, what else were they sent into the world for?" began Nellie. Then she recollected that if she wished to secure Philippa's co-operation in her little plan she must mollify, not ruffle her. So she turned the talk into another channel. "Where's Paul?" she asked, thinking a query as to the whereabouts of her lover must be an agreeable topic to the "engaged young lady."

But Philippa did not seem to find it so.

"Really, Nellie, you are always very anxious about Paul's doings. You never come near me but what you ask 'Where's Paul?' or 'What does Paul think of this, that, or the other?'" she answered in the same irritable tone as before.

And Nellie, looking down into Philippa's clouded face, read the truth for the first time—that her twin-sister was jealous of her.

Philippa's brown eyes, brown hair, and delicate complexion were as like Nellie's as a twin-sister's could well be, but there were certain broad lines of difference between the two girl-faces.

Brown hair can be straight or wavy, brown eyes can be demure or fun-loving. Philippa's hair and eyes belonged to the former class, Nellie's to the latter. Even the cut of their garments was opposite. Nellie affected the latest fashion; Philippa's stuff gown, with white bandage and black veil added, might have served for a nun.

Nellie's first impulse was hot indignation and open war; her second, pacification and a truce. Only in times of peace can diplomacy be successfully practised.

"I thought you would take it as a compliment," she began deprecatingly.

"Ah, I suppose that's what Paul thinks when he says, as he so often does, 'Why doesn't Nellie come out and sit with us in the garden? She can see we are all alone.'"

"Philippa!"

"It's perfectly true." And now Philippa's voice had a downright angry note in it. "All you do is right, all I do is

wrong. I've had every one of my dresses, indoor and out, made straight and plain, and now Paul says he doesn't believe my dressmaker understands her business half so well as yours does. I've left off putting my hair in pins at night to make it wavy, and only this morning he said to me he wished I had curls like yours all over my forehead."

Nellie's astonishment took away her breath. Then a light dawned upon her. Something very disturbing must have happened to bring Philippa so near boiling-point as this.

"I believe you and Paul have had a tiff," she said, anxious to get to the bottom of the mystery.

"I never have a tiff with anyone."

"Well, what I should call a tiff, if it had happened to me. Now, what was it all about?" and here Nellie seated herself on the arm of her sister's wicker-chair, and prepared to listen to a very long story.

"I don't know what you mean," said Philippa, calming down a little. "Paul brought his cousin, Sir Francis Everard, to call on Aunt Mary this morning, while you were out. I only said to him that I was sorry Sir Francis had returned from Canada, and I hoped he wouldn't keep up an intimacy with him; it was no credit to a clergyman even to be seen in the company of such a man."

"But, Philippa, Sir Francis is the head of Paul's family. They are bound to be on good terms with each other."

"But he has led a wickedly fast life. He has run through three fortunes."

"Ah, how nice to have them to run through! And possibly by this time he may be very, very sorry for it all; and now he has come into the title may mean to settle down and be as steady as old Time. What's he like? Tall and handsome?"

"I haven't the least idea. I was obliged to shake hands with him, but I kept my eyes on the ground all the time."

"How interestingly shy you must have looked," murmured Nellie.

"And," Philippa went on, savagely now, "Paul, as a clergyman, ought to be more careful whom he takes up with. He was hard and bitter enough the other day, when he spoke about the way in which you carry on with Captain Archer if Aunt Mary is out of sight."

"Indeed, I am very much obliged to him," ejaculated Nellie, beginning to get savage too.

"Yes; and I do think, Nellie, if you've no self-respect in the matter of flirtation, you might consider how awkward it will be for me by-and-by when I want to settle down quietly and do my duty in a parish to have people saying, as Paul did the other day, 'Take the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from sea to sea, and you won't find a bigger flirt in it than Nellie Fenwick.'" And having fired this shot, Philippa jumped up from her seat and made for the house.

Nellie was nearly tilted off the arm of the chair through the energy with which Philippa had quitted it. Her face was crimson. She felt inclined to say something to the point at once, regardless of consequences. Reflection, however, brought to her mind the little project to which she had, so to speak, pledged her talents in Cousin Geoffrey's hearing. The "something to the point" could be deferred, or might be addressed very effectively to Paul himself on the first opportunity.

So she ran after Philippa, and caught her up on the doorstep.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" she asked. "It's stifling indoors. Can't you bring your work out here? If we don't talk about the men we sha'n't quarrel."

Philippa pulled out her watch.

"I'm due at the Zenana working-party in half an hour. Paul said he would call for me. I told him, unless he could get rid of Sir Francis, he need not trouble."

Nellie had a question to put.

"How much does Aunt Mary subscribe to the Working Guild?" she asked, dropping her voice, for it occurred to her that some of the windows overhead might be open.

"Two guineas a year. Why do you ask?"

Nellie's voice dropped lower.

"Why don't you ask her to double it—or, better still, get your secretary to ask her for a lump sum down. It's my belief she ought to subscribe as much again to all the charities now."

"As much again! What do you mean? Anyone would think she had had a legacy left her to hear you."

"And so she did have a legacy. Poor Uncle Edward didn't forget her the other day."

"Oh, if you call a hundred pounds a legacy!"

"Philippa, how do you know it was only a hundred pounds? You didn't see the will?"

"Oh, Aunt Rosie told me it was, or somebody else did. Why, what do you mean?"

"If it were thousands do you think they would tell us? Do they ever tell us their business affairs? Don't you think Aunt Mary would say to herself, 'Now, if we tell those girls all the money that has come to us, they'll be wanting double dress allowance—at least Nellie will—or a pair of ponies all to themselves, or a hundred other extravagances.' I dare say all the truth will come out by-and-by."

"I think you're talking nonsense, Nellie," interrupted Philippa. But, nevertheless, as she went upstairs to her room to put on a demure poke-bonnet for her working-party, she couldn't help thinking, after all, there might be something of truth in Nellie's hints, and that, if Aunt Mary had really had a lucky windfall, it would be just as well for the Zenana working-party to get a little of it. The funds were terribly low, the workers were almost at a standstill for lack of material. Yes, she would make a suggestion to the secretary that very afternoon; and if, after all, nothing came of it, no harm would be done.

Meantime Nellie went wandering round the garden in anything but a pleasant frame of mind. She had contrived to set her ball rolling, not a doubt, but, now that it was done, she wasn't exactly sure that it was the sort of thing she liked doing. Of course there would be a lot of fun to be got out of it, and the best of the fun was yet to come; but still, as Philippa had said, fun wasn't the whole of life, and perhaps might be got at too high a price. It wasn't altogether nice to be setting whispers afloat in this way about a high-minded lady who, whatever her faults might be ("Goodness knows they're legion!" she murmured), had never failed in her duties in life. Well, there, it was done, and couldn't be undone. She was fairly in for it now, and must carry it through to the end. Step number two must be taken as soon as possible. She would go and see Lady Sowerby that afternoon, or to-morrow, perhaps, and set the whispers afloat in another quarter.

It was scorchingly hot. The grass on the tennis-lawn looked green and tempting; a racquet and some balls were lying beside the net. She picked up the racquet and began batting the balls about. The exercise seemed to let off a little of her bad temper. There could be no doubt about it,



she was in a very bad temper—with herself for embarking in a little game her conscience wouldn't let her keep up with spirit; with other people for saying, as they did, such persistently unkind things about her. She a flirt indeed! Why beyond Captain Archer and Paul she scarcely knew a man to speak to. As for Paul, her conscience was quite clear; she looked upon him as a brother, just as though Philippa were married to him already. It was utterly ridiculous of Philippa to be so jealous and cross. And as for Captain Archer—well, of course, if he said soft, pretty things to her, she was bound to bend her head and listen. And really he was so handsome, that it was a downright pleasure occasionally to look up at him; and then, of course, if he caught her looking and looked back again, she was bound to drop her eyes to study the pattern of the Turkey carpet, for no one could stand the gaze of those dark, handsome eyes of his.

Here the sun seemed to dazzle her, and her ball went a little astray. But what a delightful racquet, so light, and such a lovely yet withal rough handle! Whose could it be? Someone must have left it behind after the tennis-party yesterday. She looked at the handle. Why, how strange; there was "Arthur Archer" written on it in big black letters!

"I wonder if he left it behind on purpose," thought the girl, "so as to have an excuse for coming in to-day."

The crunch of footsteps on the gravel cut her wonders short. The orchard which bounded the garden owned to a gate opening direct on the high-road. Intimate friends of Aunt Mary had the privilege of entry through this gate to the house. It cut off a dusty bend in the road, which entrance by the front door entailed.

Nellie's heart beat a little quickly. The intruding steps might be those of Captain Archer in search of his racquet. It was something of a disappointment to see Paul coming along in company with another man, whom Nellie at once concluded to be his cousin. He looked a good fifteen years older than Paul, and was tall and distinguished-looking. His face had many lines in it, and his mouth owned to a decidedly satirical curve.

"Where is Philippa?" asked Paul, as he shook hands; "I promised to take her to her working-party." Then he introduced to Nellie his cousin, Sir Francis Everard.

"Philippa has been gone at least half an hour, and I should say is in about the middle of her fifteenth seam by this time," answered Nellie stiffly, for she was not at all inclined to forgive Paul his iniquities.

The name on the handle of Nellie's racquet caught Paul's eye.

"Give that racquet to me, Nellie; I shall see Archer this afternoon, and will return it to him," he said a little sharply.

"Thank you; I'll take care of it till Captain Archer calls for it," answered Nellie defiantly, all Paul's disagreeable speeches coming at a rush into her mind.

"What do you mean? How can that thing want taking care of? Don't be ridiculous!" said Paul hotly.

Nellie looked him full in the face.

"Take the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from sea to sea, and you won't find a bigger flirt in it than Nellie Fenwick," she said slowly, and then walked away down the garden-path, racquet in hand.

Paul flushed scarlet. Sir Francis laughed.

"Take my word for it, she hasn't her sister's sweet temper," he said, as together they made their way into the house; "of all things in the world, give me a soft-speaking, amiable woman. It's lucky for you your choice didn't fall upon this one."

Paul did not answer.

Nellie subsided into a better frame of mind now that she had paid off one of her debts.

"He'll take care what he says of me another time," she said with a little laugh, as she seated herself in a creeper-covered summer-house which overlooked the tennis-ground, intending to wait there until Paul and his cousin, having ascertained Philippa's intended movements for the day, had taken their departure.

The arbour was a pleasant little haven of refuge from the sultriness of the garden. A thunder-storm seemed threatening. The air was heavy with the scent of carnation and honeysuckle. A pair of Nellie's white doves, with a flutter and a coo, flew past, and in another moment twinkled like two silver butterflies against a bank of black clouds slowly piling overhead. A big leisurely bee went droning past. It was all delicious laziness and drowsy enjoyment. Nellie began to feel sleepy.

"I should like London immensely for three months in the year," she said to herself, "but even there I don't think I could live without a garden." And then her eyelids began to droop.

But once more the sound of footsteps and voices broke in on her reveries. They seemed coming from the house this time. A peep-hole between the boughs of her arbour showed her Captain Archer and Cousin Geoffrey making for the tennis-lawn. They were no doubt in search of the captain's racquet.

"I thought I threw it down here somewhere last evening. It doesn't in the least matter," he was saying as he came along. But if he thought he had left it on the lawn it was very strange that he should be looking up and down the garden-paths, and even over the fence across the orchard. Something else beside his racquet surely he must have been in search of.

So at least Nellie thought, and she laughed softly to herself, saying, "I won't stir, and he sha'n't have his racquet, and next time we meet I'll tell him I watched him from the summer-house all the time he was with Cousin Geoffrey, and I shall see his face change, and know exactly how much he is disappointed."

"I'll look in again for it; don't trouble any more," Archer went on, evidently not seeing what he wanted. "Good-bye; I'll go out through your orchard-gate if you'll allow me."

Cousin Geoffrey went back into the house. Captain Archer made his way towards the orchard, and, passing in front of the summer-house, spied Nellie in her hiding-place.

"I have a particular wish not to be disturbed in my reveries this morning," she said demurely, without stirring, as he lifted his hat in recognition.

"And I have a particular wish to respect your wishes this morning," he said, in reply, as he seated himself beside her on the rustic seat.

Captain Archer's personal appearance was exactly of the sort to captivate the fancy of a young girl. His face and figure were those of the typical soldier who has "seen service". An erect carriage, bronzed features, bold black eyes, and knowledge how to use them, may have much to answer for in the matter of maidens' broken hearts, more especially when they are found in company with a mellifluous voice, and a facility in the art of putting deep meaning into trivial words and phrases. Captain Archer was an adept in this. He would ask after your health in a tone of voice which implied that his own would suffer if you had so much as a little-finger ache. He would petition for five

minutes' chat with you with as earnest a look in his eyes, as most men would have put into them in asking for a partner for life.

So now, when he sat down by Nellie's side, and said four simple words, "Are you quite well?" they did not sound in the least like the same words on Paul's lips or Cousin Geoffrey's. Nellie, as she answered his question, said to herself: "And there are actually people in the world who can't tell what a man wants when he makes love to you—heart or money! If this man doesn't want heart I don't know who does."

What a sweet, dreamy ten minutes they had out there in the creeper-covered arbour!

The luncheon-bell clanging brought Nellie from dreamland to solid earth again; she jumped to her feet and held out her hand.

"From the sublime to the prosaic," said Captain Archer, holding her hand a prisoner for a moment for the sake of saying his good-bye to her eyes. "Why doesn't Miss Fenwick ever ask me to stay luncheon with you? I shall depart forlornly to eat a chop at the St. George's."

The words "St. George's" sent Nellie's brain back to her little plot again. Her eyes sparkled with fun.

"Aunt Mary has grown too grand to ask anybody to luncheon lately. I suppose she intends cultivating no one lower than a Duke or Marquis now," she answered.

"What do you mean?" ejaculated Captain Archer, surprised.

"Oh, haven't you heard of Aunt Mary's legacy?"

"I knew that you had had a legacy, and I was heartily glad."

This, no doubt, was true enough.

"Ah, you see, I talked of my legacy, but Aunt Mary kept hers to herself. Don't speak of it at the St. George's on any account. Aunt Mary has a mortal terror of men running after her for her money. Good-bye—I must go in."

"But you don't mean to say that Aunt Mary's legacy was a bigger one than yours?"

"I don't mean to say anything," replied Nellie. But her manner said a good deal.

Captain Archer laid down his racquet, which he had taken up while he was talking.

"I won't take it to-day, and then, perhaps, I may be allowed to come to-morrow and look for it," he said, as he

shook hands, impressively as before, and turned his steps towards the orchard-gate.

Nellie went back to the house with a bright, pretty flush on her cheeks.

"There will be only Lady Sowerby to tell now, and the thing's done," she said to herself. On the door-step she turned her head for one more glimpse of the Captain's vanishing figure. "Ah," she murmured softly again, "if he doesn't want heart I don't know what he does want!"

#### CHAPTER II. COUNTERPLOT.

AUNT MARY was laughing—heartily. Aunt Rosie was laughing—softly. Cousin Geoffrey stood by with never a smile on his thin face—with not so much as a twinkle in his eye. Those who understood Cousin Geoffrey knew this meant that he thought the joke a very good one indeed.

Aunt Mary had been in the very midst of "labelling creation"—in other words, ticketing her geological specimens, Aunt Rosie was knee-deep in her housekeeping books, when Cousin Geoffrey had come in, and, in treacherous fashion, had laid bare Nellie's plot to get rid of her guardian by marrying her out of hand.

Aunt Mary had looked up from a dear little bone she was scrutinising through her glasses—someone had told her it was a jaw-bone of an extinct ape.

"Ah," she had ejaculated, bone in hand, "Thomas Carlyle did say 'England contained upwards of thirty millions of people, most of them fools.' I endorse his statement."

"Did he say so? A better heart would have taught him better manners," Cousin Geoffrey had replied. Then he had detailed in full his own little scheme of a counterplot. "It is clear to me," he had said, "that Nellie's thousand pounds' legacy has been exaggerated among her friends, possibly to ten times its amount. There's Archer, up to his eyes in debt. He, no doubt, thinks that her portion will be at least ten thousand. Very well then, let's fall in with the girl's whim, transfer the thousands from niece to aunt, and see if a transfer of the affections won't be the immediate result."

Upon which Aunt Mary had replied: "Exactly the same idea occurred to me while you were speaking." Then she had added, after a moment's pause: "Those who play with fire must thank themselves for their burns."

That had been a fortnight ago. Plot

and counterplot had since had time to work.

Now, as the two ladies on their "At Home" day, sat waiting in their drawing-room to receive their friends, they had such a ludicrous succession of incidents to relate to each other, that it was no wonder they should enjoy a hearty laugh, or that Cousin Geoffrey should stand by looking preternaturally serious.

Aunt Mary was a tall, stately person, with a very high bridge to her nose, and a very high top-knot of hair exactly in the middle of her head. One saw the nose and the top-knot before anything else. After that the spectacles—big, solid-looking things—claimed one's attention; then the voice, dogmatic, abrupt. She had a terse method of "putting a thing into a nutshell", as she called it, was fond of telling people to "take a common-sense view of things", or that "a grain of fact was worth a ton of theory". Phrases especially irritating to Cousin Geoffrey, who was in the habit of declaring that common-sense was another name for prejudice, and that he "detested facts, they were so misleading".

Aunt Rosie was simply the softest, sweetest, most loveable of old maids conceivable; adored everywhere by servants, children, horses, cats, and dogs. She had been engaged for ten years to one man, and he had died. Since then her kindness had been a thing to wonder at.

"That little goose, Nellie," Aunt Mary said, when she found her voice again, "how she must be puzzling her brains at the present moment! I have had applications from charities all through the week, and have nearly ruined myself by the extravagant sums I have given everywhere to keep up the joke. Five pounds here, ten pounds there! How disappointed the poor souls will be when I subside into my modest one-guinea subscriptions again!"

"I saw Nellie's eyes open when you signed that big cheque this morning," put in Aunt Rosie.

"Oh, that was for the local Archery and Tennis Club! They've asked permission to put me down as patroness to it, and to the afternoon dances. Of course, it means opening one's purse a little. But it'll be money well spent, if it serves to open a girl's eyes to the smallness of her powers of attraction compared with those of the god Mammon. As a matter of fact——"

"Oh, if facts are coming in, I shall go," interjected Cousin Geoffrey.

But he was met at the drawing-room

door by a stream of callers, and was compelled to turn back.

Meantime Philippa and Nellie, in their music-room upstairs, were neither laughing softly nor heartily. Nellie was in the bad temper now; Philippa was looking a little downcast and ashamed of herself.

"Everyone is behaving disgracefully," Nellie was asserting vigorously. "I think the sooner the world comes to an end the better. If anyone had told me a week ago that I should ever spend an evening such as I spent yesterday in Mrs. St. John's drawing-room, I should have simply said it was impossible."

"But, Nellie, I saw nothing out of the way," said Philippa deprecatingly.

"My dear, you saw nothing in the way nor out of the way. In fact, you simply saw nothing at all; you were so busily occupied in flirting with Sir Francis Everard."

"You were so cross, and Paul was so cross, I was only too glad to get away from you both; and Sir Francis was very polite and attentive to me."

"Sir Francis has led a wickedly fast life, and has run through three fortunes," said Nellie mockingly.

Philippa flushed scarlet and said nothing.

"Paul, as a clergyman, ought to be more careful whom he takes up with," Nellie went on.

Philippa began to cry.

"You're cross with me, Nellie, just because you had a miserable evening yourself, and no one showed you any attention. Paul said——"

"I don't care the least in the world what Paul said. You may tell him from me that next time he takes the census of the United Kingdom to find out the flirts, he'll please to put Aunt Mary, not me, in the first rank. Anything more ridiculous than her behaviour last night I never saw. Four men round her all at once, and she talking to them all at once and laying down the law—and I had to turn over my music for myself!"

"Paul wanted to turn over for you and you wouldn't let him."

"Paul! I would as soon have the east wind turn over for me as Paul. He does it with such a flutter."

"Captain Archer was showing some sea-eggs embedded in flint to Aunt Mary. He had gone ever so far to find them."

"I know exactly what Captain Archer was doing. I have eyes in my head for

what goes on about me. I don't spend my time flirting with a wicked——"

But the word "baronet" was cut off by the door opening and the appearance of Cousin Geoffrey's melancholy face.

"Your aunt's drawing-room is filled to overflowing with visitors this afternoon. They want you two girls down to help entertain," he said.

This was a mild way of putting what had really happened. Aunt Mary, talking with deaf Lady Scudamore in the window-recess, had spied Captain Archer coming up the front of the house.

"That man is coming for his racquet again," she had whispered to Cousin Geoffrey. "It's the fourteenth time within the last fortnight, and he always departs without it! Go and fetch Nellie down. There's going to be some fun."

Nellie entered the room to find about fifteen ladies present and three men. The men surrounded Aunt Mary.

Two spinster ladies fastened upon her.

"Come and tell us all about it, Nellie," one said. "The will was found in an old cabinet, written entirely in your poor uncle's handwriting, and witnessed only by his butler and valet—was it not so? We were calling at Lady Sowerby's yesterday, and heard all about it."

"And they said the cabinet had been sold with the rest of the furniture," continued the other lady, "bought by a furniture-dealer, and exhibited in his shop-window. And the butler, happening to pass—no, it was the head-gardener, I think they said—saw it, and thinking he would like to have some memento of his old master, bought it, and chancing to pull it open——"

"No," the first lady interposed; "it was one of the children who pulled open the drawer and found out the secret spring. Of course your aunt will buy the cabinet. I should amazingly like to see it."

Nellie felt her brain going round. A voice sounding over the buzz of talk in the room made it steady in a moment. It was Captain Archer's mellifluous baritone. He was exhibiting one by one a succession of "specimens" to Aunt Mary.

"I don't know whether they're of the least value," he was saying, "but if they supply any gaps in your cabinet, I shall feel myself more than repaid for my long walks in search of them."

Possibly a scientific friend of Captain Archer's, who was just then "weeding" his collection, might have given another



version of the manner in which the specimens had come into the Captain's possession.

Aunt Mary eyed them only a moment.

"Ammonites—every one," she said with decision; "of no use to me, for I have them all, but of infinite use to you if you will set to work and find out all there is to be known about them."

Captain Archer sighed.

"I am thinking of taking up some serious study. A man wasn't sent into the world for the sole purpose of spending his afternoons in tennis, and his evenings in billiards."

"One wonders what they were sent into the world for—some of them," murmured Cousin Geoffrey, for Nellie's benefit.

"Now, if someone would be good enough to put me in the way of the thing—give me a few hints how to set about beginning, I should certainly take up with geology," Archer went on with a look in his eyes, which Nellie had hitherto imagined only her own pretty brown eyes could bring to the Captain's black ones.

Aunt Mary was affability itself.

"I study science while my frivolous young nieces play tennis," she answered graciously.

"Come in any afternoon you like, and you may take your choice between the lawn and my geological library."

"The game will undoubtedly have to make its bow to the science," was Captain Archer's reply, as he rose to take his leave.

"Isn't it fun—glorious fun?" whispered Cousin Geoffrey, right into Nellie's ear. "Never mind how it ends, the middle's the fun of the thing, and we're right in the very middle of it now."

#### CHAPTER III. IN WINDSOR PARK.

NELLIE was putting on her hat with slow, unwilling fingers in front of her glass.

"I wish," she was saying to herself, "all the nightingales had been drowned in the flood! To think of an old maid like Aunt Mary—nearly fifty, if she is a day—jaunting out in the twilight to hear the wretched little creatures sing. I dare say she will attire herself in a Rubens hat and let down her hair to her waist. Well, it seems to me the best thing the girls can do will be to put on poke-bonnets and act the chaperon to the old maids. Now I think of it, this hat is far too juvenile for anyone under forty-five; I'll hunt up one of Philippa's old pokes instead."

So the pretty straw hat was tossed on

one side, and one of Philippa's discarded bonnets substituted.

The grey of a June evening was beginning to fall. Out in the pleasant roads and bye-ways the yellow light from a sunset sky still lingered, but in the deep green glades of Windsor Park the reign of shadows had begun. There was the "melancholy music" of the nightingales cleaving its way through the thick leafage of oak and elm, straight up to the dark or starry skies, and there were the lasses and lads, all in tune with the lovemaking birds, assembling in the lonely glades to catch all they could of the "melting, mystic lay".

Lasses and lads, however, had by no means secured a monopoly of the lonely glades. Captain Archer had said to Aunt Mary, with vastly sentimental emphasis: "This is nightingale time! Dreamy twilight, sad melody, a congenial companion—could one have a better idea of Paradise?" And, lo! the lady had at once ordered a *recherché* little dinner for a few friends, and arranged for a twilight ramble in the park afterwards.

"I can't keep up the joke much longer," Aunt Mary had confessed. "In the first place my purse won't stand it. I've been so munificent all round that I doubt if I shall be able to pay my baker's bill at the end of the year. In the second place, the muscles of my mouth are positively aching for a good laugh at the expense of the ridiculous fortune-hunter. In the last place, our purpose is fairly accomplished. Nellie, I imagine, will never again to the end of her life, 'dote upon the military'. Possibly, to make the cure permanent, and as a final act in the little comedy, it may be advisable to give one more hard knock to her pride. It can be given just as well under the trees in Windsor Park as here in our drawing-room."

So, sitting in conclave, the two aunts and Cousin Geoffrey made out the programme of the day that was to deal the final blow to Nellie's pride and thoroughly rout the Captain.

"We'll have a little dinner first so as to collect together our party—four men and four ladies," said Aunt Mary, going minutely into all the details of her final act; "and Captain Archer shall take Nellie in to dinner."

Cousin Geoffrey and Aunt Rosie exclaimed in chorus at this.

"And," Aunt Mary went on, "he'll sit

between her and me at table. You will see in which direction his head will turn."

"For refinement in torture give me a woman," murmured Cousin Geoffrey.

Aunt Mary ignored him, and went on :

"Sir Francis Everard will take me in to dinner, and will sit on the other side of the table, between me and Philippa. You will see in which direction *his* head will turn."

"Why—why," began Aunt Rosie. "You don't mean to say——"

"I mean to say that Philippa has managed her love-affairs every whit as badly as Nellie, and unless someone takes them in hand for her will pair with the wrong man. I shall do my best to set things straight. Paul will take her in to dinner, and—mark my words—will do nothing but stare across the table at Nellie."

"But surely Philippa would make an ideal clergyman's wife! What more in a woman could Paul expect or want?" interposed Aunt Rosie.

"Ah, the ideal clergyman's wife of story-books! In real life it generally happens that curates marry the fastest girls in their congregation, not the good, meek little saints. To conclude, Cousin Geoffrey will take you in to dinner, and being a sensible middle-aged man with no love-affairs to trouble him, will, no doubt, keep his eye——"

"Upon the company generally. There will be occupation for a discerning eye," interrupted Cousin Geoffrey.

"Upon his plate, I was going to say," finished Aunt Mary dryly; "there will be occupation for a discerning palate. My cook is excellent."

So the dinner was arranged and eaten. Aunt Mary's prophecy was fulfilled to its last syllable. Captain Archer, seated between Nellie and Aunt Mary, showed to the former a patronising, fatherly kindness which took the salt out of her soup, the sugar out of her sweets; to the latter a deferential attention, which could only be construed as the outcome of an admiration he was proud to acknowledge. Sir Francis Everard throughout the repast had eyes and ears only for his younger neighbour. As for Paul and Nellie, their tempers seemed about on a par. Moody and abstracted, they somehow got through the meal, sending away half the dishes untasted, and limiting their conversation to monosyllables.

"Are you qualifying for a nun, Nellie," asked Philippa, staring with amazed eyes

at her own discarded bonnet on her sister's head as they set off, a goodly company of eight, for their twilight ramble.

Philippa's personal appearance had undergone something of a transformation, since she first shook hands with Sir Francis Everard under the mulberry-tree. There is the dowdy demureness of the girl who gives neither time nor thought to the matter of dress, and there is the effective demureness of the expert in fashion's arts. Philippa's style of dress had passed almost imperceptibly from the one phase to the other.

Paul also had a remark to make anent Nellie's bonnet.

"Why do you ever wear hats, Nellie? You can have no idea how well a bonnet suits you," he said, trying to speak in his old brother-like fashion, and utterly oblivious of the fact that the said bonnet on Philippa's head had called forth anything but a compliment.

Nellie's reply did not seem altogether to the point.

"I wish," she said, bringing out the words with a rush, "that all the bonnets, and all the hats, and all the nightingales were where a great many people ought to be to-night—at the bottom of the sea." Then she hastened on ahead at such a tremendous pace, that Cousin Geoffrey's powers were taxed to overtake her.

Naturally enough within the park-gates they fell into parties of twos.

"The grove of acacias is the place to make for; the birds come back to the spot every year," said Aunt Mary. Then she had contrived to whisper a word to Cousin Geoffrey: "Don't forget! under the big oak—the one struck by lightning, which has a seat all round it—in three-quarters of an hour from now."

"Aunt Rosie is all alone," said Philippa very sweetly to Paul; "do you mind taking charge of her? I am too hot to hurry on so fast."

"Where is Cousin Geoffrey," queried Paul sharply, straining his eyes in the dimness, to get a glimpse of two vanishing figures at the end of a long, shadowy avenue, and thinking what an admirable arrangement it would be if he and Cousin Geoffrey could change partners for the evening.

He received no answer to his question. Philippa, in company with Sir Francis Everard, had already strayed away across the greensward, a little out of the beaten track. If he did not wish to be driven

for sole companionship to his own thoughts he must seek that of Aunt Rosie. No alternative remained.

The soft evening breeze rustled among the leaves, bringing with it the scent of cut hay from outside fields, and lifting and shifting the rapidly deepening shadows. A company of startled deer fled swiftly across the path, jostling each other and trampling down in all directions the tall bracken.

"The sensible brutes!" said Cousin Geoffrey; "they saw we were—well, not in the best of tempers to-night. Now, if we only had a bow and arrow, Nellie."

"Speak for yourself," answered Nellie sharply; "I never in my life felt in a more amiable frame of mind;" and again she went on at a tremendous pace.

Cousin Geoffrey looked over his shoulder. "We're well ahead of them now, Nellie," he said with evident satisfaction; "shall we take breath?"

"Well ahead of whom?" asked Nellie, still irritable and sore.

"Of Captain Archer and Aunt Mary. I thought you were trying to run away from them, so I put the pace on."

"Run away from them! Why should I?" cried Nellie furiously. "As if it mattered an atom to me where they were, or what they were doing! I had even forgotten they had come out with us to-night!"

Soft and low at this moment fell a sweet "jug, jug," from a bird, perched high on a big acacia almost at their elbow.

Cousin Geoffrey laid his hand on Nellie's arm.

"They are tuning up. Shall we stay here and listen?" he asked.

Nellie's answer was to cover both her ears with her hands.

"I won't be made to listen to nightingales if I don't choose. I hate and detest them!" she said. "I'm going to walk, walk, walk to-night, and then go home and get to sleep as fast as possible."

But the nightingales had no mind to be treated with indifference. They would be listened to, whether one chose or not. From out the deep branchy darkness came swimming their sweet, full-throated music, now tender, now loud; now passionate, now pathetic. The faint humming of a few sleepless insects, the croak of a distant frog, the cry of the night-hawk, the rustle of the breeze, died beneath it; and those stragglers under the trees, feeling all in a moment how much of love, joy, pain,

their hearts could hold, folded their hands, and stood still.

"Hush!" said Aunt Mary authoritatively to Captain Archer; "don't talk; I want to listen." Yet, was she listening? Was she not rather turning back a few pages of memory? Now she was standing beside her dying father's bed, and he was saying: "Mary, take care of your mother and sister—never leave them." Anon, she was speaking a hard, emphatic "No" to a man who stood beside her—ah, how unlike the one standing at her side now!—and he was saying, in reply: "Life ends for me to-day."

Possibly Captain Archer, while he allowed Aunt Mary the privilege of her thoughts, filled in the gap with a picture of his own—of hot sands, an African sky, a girl with a Cleopatra's eyes and big gold bracelets on her arm. One of these she was unclasping, as she said, "Take it—we shall never meet again."

Sir Francis Everard, as he stood beside Philippa, forgot all about the pathos of life, and remembered only its passion; and, as he bent low over Philippa's upturned face, with its shining eyes, he whispered words that might never have come to his lips if the nightingales that night had somehow lost the trick of song.

Aunt Rosie once more saw the lover's face she had last kissed in a coffin, and her cheeks went from pink to white. Paul saw a living face, whose lips he thought death might, perhaps, let him kiss, but life never. And poor, petulant, self-confident Nellie, grateful for the darkness which hid the hot rush of tears in her eyes, felt all her wounds throbbing, her mistakes swelling to the magnitude of unpardonable sins, her follies claiming for themselves an endless celebrity.

"Cousin Geoffrey," she faltered, "I am tired, I want to go home, but I don't want to turn back and meet the others. How can we get out of the park?"

So Cousin Geoffrey led the way out of the grove through the bracken, past some sleepy black cattle with big horns, straight to the grand old oak whose topmost boughs had flung defiance to the heavens, and so had had a thunder-bolt for their pains.

"Let us sit down here a minute, Nellie," he said, kindly though jesuitically; "we'll get behind the tree on this seat, and if the others pass this way they won't see us."

Two and two, the rest of the party came along out of the grove into the open,

feeling the fresh breeze something of a relief after the music-weighted air of the grove with its under-note of pathos.

Aunt Mary and Captain Archer, however, were the only two whose footsteps turned in the direction of Nellie's hiding-place.

She shivered into the shadows, and held in her breath.

"She'll see us," she whispered to Cousin Geoffrey, as she peeped round the big trunk at the pair; "no, she won't—yes, she will. Oh, goodness! they're going to sit down."

And sit down they did.

"You take away my breath—fairly take away my breath," Aunt Mary was saying, as she took her seat and drew her long cloak around her; "of course, you have paid me a very high compliment—the highest a man can pay a woman. I offer you my best thanks in return, but, really, you must give me time to consider."

Nellie's heart seemed to be killing itself with its own beating at that moment, it throbbed at such a pace.

Captain Archer's reply came in his usual slow, impressive tones. "Time would be another word for torture," he said; "surely in one moment the voice of the heart can be heard. Let it speak now, I pray."

"Well, at my time of life the heart is not in the habit of saying rash ecstatic things, and perhaps might be safely listened to. It says to me at the present moment, 'Be a little careful; marriage is for life, not for a week or a month. Men are proverbially fickle—a young, pretty face will sometimes wreck a man's constancy.'"

"Nay, by Heaven!" cried Captain Archer with energy; "young, pretty faces, I assure you, have never had the smallest attraction for me, and as I get on in life are not likely to have more. Give me intellect—intellect, that's what I say. It's worth a hundred young, pretty faces any day."

"Ah, you say so now, but you may alter your mind."

"Alter my mind!" broke in the Captain vehemently; "it's the young, pretty faces that make a man alter his mind, not the intellectual ones. Now between ourselves let me say the modern pretty young lady seems to me the type of everything that is silly and frivolous."

"A little while ago you seemed to me to have rather a liking for silly, frivolous young people. A tennis-lawn saw a good deal of you."

Captain Archer had a sudden prolonged fit of coughing. When he recovered his

voice he said: "Let me explain, You are alluding to a—a certain little—well, shall I say flirtation, which took place between me and your niece, Miss Nellie."

Nellie gave a great start. Cousin Geoffrey put his hand on her shoulder. "Hush, don't betray yourself! Aunt Mary will be furious if she finds out we're here," he whispered.

"It's contemptible—horribly contemptible, sitting here listening to their talk," whispered Nellie.

"What was that?" asked Archer, turning his head in the direction of the sound.

"It was the deer," said Aunt Mary calmly; "pray go on with your explanation;" this added a little stiffly.

"It's—a—a rather difficult task, unless one is brutally plain-spoken."

"I prefer the truth, even if it be brutal."

"Well, then, it's just this. Miss Nellie is a charming girl—a very charming girl; but, as possibly you have found out, intellect she has none."

"I've had that fact specially brought under my notice during the past few months."

"Exactly. During the past few months. And no doubt you have also noted another fault she has—a very serious one."

"Name it."

"I scarcely dare. But if you insist, it's just this: she is rather too fond of laying herself out to attract attention. We soldiers, you know, are quite accustomed to have to face that sort of thing among girls, and call it—it's not a nice expression—a 'girl throwing herself at a man's head.'"

Here Nellie absolutely jumped off her seat; but Cousin Geoffrey was firm and made her sit down again.

"If this doesn't cure her I don't know what will," he muttered to himself.

"What was that?" again asked Archer, looking over his shoulder.

"It was the black cattle; they are behind the tree. I saw them as we came along. Go on," said Aunt Mary tranquilly.

"Well, as perhaps you know, men are always ready enough to flirt with such girls to any extent, but marry them never. I confess the thought of marrying Miss Nellie never for one moment entered my head. Her attractions are not at all to my taste."

"You have greatly relieved my mind. I confess I had serious apprehensions on the matter."

"Ah, she's jealous! Capital sign!" thought Archer.



"Now since you've been so perfectly candid with me, I will return the compliment and tell you honestly that my faults run in exactly an opposite direction to Nellie's. Instead of having a liking as she has for men's society, I rather shun it—in fact, there are certain men whose society I can barely tolerate."

"Capital sign! She has more than tolerated my society," thought the Captain. Aloud he said: "I know the sort you mean, the rackety, noisy sort——"

"Whose whole life," Aunt Mary went on, "is a round of gambling, billiard-playing, horse-racing, and other follies; and who, when debts begin to get pressing, try to sneak out of their difficulties by marrying an heiress."

Captain Archer fidgeted on his seat. He coughed a little nervously. "Exactly," he said. And, because he could find nothing else to say, again said "Exactly."

"As you say, exactly. Well now, be quite honest with me. Knowing my opinion of such men, and how utterly impossible it is for me to tolerate their society, do you still press your offer of marriage on me, or do you wish to withdraw it?"

"Withdraw it!" here Captain Archer in his energy jumped off his seat and stood facing Aunt Mary. "My dear madam, can you suppose such a thing? I would rather press it a hundred times over. You have described most accurately a great many men—a—of my acquaintance—of my regiment even; but such men, I assure you, I should never attempt to bring into your society should you do me the honour to marry me."

"You think you could settle down to a quiet life in our little house here."

"I should adore such a life—easy distance from town—the house is everything that's admirable."

"But I've a great objection to London life. London will never see me. And it has just occurred to me that you'll have to put down your hunter. There's only room in my stables for my two ponies."

"Consider the hunter sold," cried the Captain ecstatically, resuming his seat a little closer to the lady, and thinking how easy it would be to buy the hunter back again a little later on.

"And now I come to think of it, it would be just as well, perhaps, that I should put down my ponies. By-the-way"—this said slowly and thoughtfully—"to be quite honest with you, I've been living a little beyond my income of late."

"Beyond your income?" and Captain Archer shifted on his seat and began to look a little uncomfortable.

"I'm afraid so. You see, my income is not very big to start with. I indulge in no extravagances, it is true, but I adore my geological cabinet, and, as perhaps you know, a hundred pounds does not go very far in buying specimens. In fact, the hundred pounds which my poor brother left me the other day, went a very little way in supplying some ugly gaps in my shelves devoted to the triassic period."

"Your hundred pounds!" Pen could not express the blank astonishment and dismay which couched behind these words.

Aunt Mary took no notice of them.

"The dew is beginning to fall. We must think of getting back to the house," she said. "Well, now, Captain Archer, that we have been so perfectly honest and straightforward with each other, I don't see why our chances of happiness in the married life should not be as good as those of any other prudent middle-aged persons free from vices and extravagances. Come, let us be going."

She rose as she finished speaking. Captain Archer did not stir. There came a long uncomfortable pause. "I feel, after your extreme candour to me just now," he said at length, halting and stumbling over his words, "that it is due to you to make a confession—a—a—most painful one, but I shall not spare myself."

"There is no necessity for such a thing. I am not one of those who think a man is bound to confess all his youthful follies to the woman he wishes to marry."

"But these are not youthful follies, and a—a—the truth is—a—that the older I get the closer they stick to me."

"Ah, I'm sure you'll shake them off easily enough beside a quiet fireside."

"No, confound it!" cried Archer, jumping to his feet; "nothing of the sort. A quiet fireside would make them stick harder than ever. The fact is," he went on excitedly, "I wouldn't—no—I couldn't do such a mean thing as marry a woman under pretence of shaking off my bad habits and settling down for life tied to her apron-strings. Some men could do it, but not I."

Aunt Mary surveyed him with a quiet smile. "My dear friend," she said blandly, "your sense of honour is so fine as to be all but wire-drawn. Some women might take advantage of it, but not I——"

"Three hunters and a hack are a

necessity of existence to me," broke in the Captain with a violent jerk.

"To a man who can exhibit such a fine generosity as you have shown to-night even three hunters and a hack might be forgiven."

"And as for billiards and a—a—brandy-and-soda——"

"My dear friend, even brandy and billiards could be condoned in a man of your magnanimity of temper; out of fiction I could not have believed such a character possible."

"Good Heavens, madam!" cried the Captain, fairly carried away by excitement now, "what is it you can't condone or forgive—will you tell me that? I tell you I abhor all the sciences—geology in particular; I have a terror of an intellectual woman, especially if she is on the wrong side of forty. I detest virtue; I adore the vices—every one of them. I've led a worse life than Jack Sheppard himself—than Jack Sheppard himself, do you understand?—than Jack Sheppard and Tom Jones rolled into one. I've cheated at cards, I've borrowed money all round without having the smallest intention of ever paying it back; in fact I——"

"Stand confessed as about the biggest scoundrel that ever wore shoe-leather," finished Cousin Geoffrey, coming round from behind the tree at that moment. "Well, sir, will you allow me to make the suggestion that you should offer this lady the humblest of apologies for the offer you were good enough to make her a little while ago of your disreputable name and your damaged fortune."

"And will you allow me," said Nellie, coming round the tree on the other side and making him a little mock curtsy, "to thank you for the high compliment you paid me a minute ago when you confessed that my attractions were not to your taste." It was too dark to see her face, but the cheery, mocking tone in her voice told Aunt Mary that the girl's skin-deep wounds were healed already.

"It's a planned thing—a planned thing from first to last to insult me!" cried Archer, trying to shake himself into a tume of virtuous indignation.

There came the rustling of dresses, the trampling of feet through the bracken at this moment. The rest of the party was at hand.

And, presently, to Nellie it seemed as though the dusky, silent glade had all at once become alive with light and sound,

as though a whole multitude of stars had suddenly flashed forth in the dark heavens, a mighty wind had come rushing down the shadowy acacia-grove towards them with the music of all the nightingales on its wings.

For Paul had come close to her side and had whispered in her ear while his hand sought hers in the darkness:

"Nellie, such news! Philippa has thrown me over for Francis, and my heart isn't broken a bit. So I can offer it whole to you, dear—yours for life."

## A BYGONE STORY.

BY W. W. FENN.

### CHAPTER I.

#### WHAT WAS IN THE OLD MAN'S DESK.

A ROOM in a farmhouse, with all the signs in furniture and fittings expected in the abode of a well-to-do yeoman. The yeoman himself, a very old but hale and hearty man, sitting at the table, and by the aid of a quite modern paraffin-lamp, examining the contents of a battered, time-worn desk open before him. He has just laid aside a much-thumbed, dog-eared account-book, from which he has taken one or two letters and a thickish packet of manuscript, all showing, by the faded ink and yellowed paper, that they may be as old as he is. Such of the writing as we are concerned with shall speak for itself.

First, the account-book, which bears the superscription, Jane Burt. Inside, under date June 2nd, 1810, there stand the names, "Mr. and Mrs. Roderick Craven. Letting best rooms from this date for four weeks, to June 30th, at 25s., £5 0s. 0d."

Then a preliminary letter from this Mr. Craven, dated from Oxford, negotiating for the hire of the rooms in a certain Bower Well Cottage, Creedon Wells, Worcestershire, and addressed to Mrs. Burt, the landlady. "He has been informed of them by a friend, and wishes to know if he can bring his wife there, who has been out of health." It is written on the large-sized post-paper common in those days, and is in the same handwriting as the manuscript—that of Mr. Roderick Craven, evidently an author. The manuscript itself now lies under the spectacled eyes of the veteran yeoman, and we will follow them as he reads it. On its front page, as a note, are these words, in faded pencil:

"This adventure will serve as a basis of a sketch for one of the annuals. Heath has often pestered me to write him one for his 'Book of Beauty.' Here is the idea. Then it begins thus:

"Ideal country quarters at last. Hard to reach, but when reached, promising well. Though why the landlady gazed at me as she did, so enquiringly and so strangely, puzzles me much. That the unlooked-for and startling interruption to our peace should have happened was very unfortunate, there is no doubt, but we must be thankful that it proved no worse.

"The snug sitting and bed rooms in Bower Well Cottage are one above the other, and have each a bow-window looking out across a patch of garden upon a lovely prospect and up a narrow avenue of trees. The house is oddly situated, jammed, as it were, into a nook in the hills, a third of the way up to their top. It is long and narrow, the kitchen and landlady's apartments being at the back, while one side rests against the slope. On the other is the entrance—opposite the well or spring, which, gushing forth from a rocky fern-clad dell, pours itself into a rough stone basin, thence finding its way at its own sweet will to the valley far below. A primitive wooden shed shelters it, and makes, with a bench, a snug corner and resting-place for visitors coming to drink the waters. There is a rough, steep carriage-road to this point about a quarter of a mile long, from where it leaves the main-road between Worcester and Hereford, which runs along the valley at the foot of the hills, and just where the straggling village of Crendon Wells has its solitary hostelry. Thus the Bower Well and the cottage stand in a wildish, lonely spot quite by themselves; and as the road leading to them ends there, it is little used except by pilgrims; but from there the hill-paths proper begin—at the very garden-gate almost of the cottage, and with the narrow avenue referred to. The whole region is very beautiful, though but little wooded save just hereabouts, and the trees, even, which form the avenue gradually die away a few yards higher on the hillside. No wonder it is a popular health-resort, for apart from the benefit the waters may confer, the splendid air and magnificent prospect commanded on all sides must do body and mind alike infinite good.

"The evening was beautiful when we arrived from Worcester, which city we

reached the night before, after two days' posting from Oxford. Night fell, however, so rapidly that we had not much time to enjoy the view, to which, nevertheless, the rising full moon lent a wondrous charm of its own. My wife was much fatigued, and retired soon after our comfortable supper, leaving me alone in the long, low, bow-windowed parlour to finish some work I had in hand. After some long writing, the air becoming a little chilly, I rose to shut the window. It was a splendid night, and the moon, now high in the heavens, created the most beautiful, and at the same time fantastic, effect among the trees. The scent of the roses, clustering close to the window, and here and there thrusting a blossom straight within it, filled the atmosphere. I stood looking out for many minutes, enjoying the perfect serenity and beauty. The silence was almost awful in its solemnity, for only the faintest breath now and again passed among the leaves and flowers, scarcely stirring them. Loth to retreat, but remembering what was still to be completed on the desk, I at length closed the casement, and partially drew the curtains. Soon deeply absorbed by my occupation, I lost consciousness of everything save the intense stillness and the loneliness of the situation; therefore it is not surprising that I was startled by fancying I heard a gentle tap at the window. Involuntarily I looked up, and then at my watch—it was on the stroke of midnight. Listening for a second or two without hearing the faintest sound, I concluded that my ears had deceived me, but within a minute after I had resumed the pen, the tap on the glass was repeated—this time without any doubt—and then was again repeated. Was it a rose-bush, stirred by the wind, touching the pane? There was not a breath. While I was wondering all speculation was cleared away. Once more the noise came, and now distinctly—it was the firm but gentle tapping of fingers! I do not think I am less courageous than most men; but this was at least enough to have given the strongest nerves a twinge—the hour, the solitude, all considered. Surely it was but natural that I hesitated, ere walking to the window and pushing the curtain back. But I did so boldly, resolutely, in another minute, for still again came the tapping, and more prolonged; another moment, and I had opened the window, to encounter at it, and within a yard from it, a sight which certainly struck me with a passing terror.

"I have never actually disbelieved in ghosts, but after what I now saw—well!—Full in the moonlight stood the tall form of a woman, her face as white as her garments. The rays fell clear and direct upon it, and as I appeared at the open window it drew back, beckoning with uplifted hand. If this was not a ghost, I should never see one! It looked too ethereal, too unsubstantial, for aught else—besides, it appeared to glide rather than to walk. Slowly it continued to retreat—through the garden-gate, back into the avenue—seemingly unflecked by the shadows from the overhanging trees which fell, of course, in fretted pattern upon all substantial objects. This mysterious form gave out a light of its own, increased, perhaps, by that of the moon, but still independent of it. Presently it began to vanish up the avenue, though for ever looking round and beckoning; then it was gone—suddenly.

"Not to dwell on my sensations, I merely say I had a slight difficulty in collecting my thoughts. Was the whole thing an optical illusion, due to the strain that writing late puts upon the brain and eyes? I rubbed them, and resented the idea. Ears as well could not have deceived me. It was ridiculous! No similar experience would warrant it, for I am young, strong, and sound of nerve, mind, and limb. No more work for me, however. I could not settle to it, excited as I was. I waited a while watching and listening at the window. I waited there for the best part of an hour, until the moon was getting well behind the hill. No further sign of the figure appearing, I fastened the window securely, put out the light, and crept up to our bedroom, situated above the parlour, and like it in shape, size, and aspect. Happily my wife was sleeping soundly, but it was long ere I could do the same; yet, had I aroused her, be sure no word of what had happened would have passed my lips that night, nor did I let it the next morning. The disturbing effect on a delicate woman's nerves of such a story must have been prejudicial, and, whatever I thought about it myself, I determined to keep it to myself, at any rate for the present. I might have been deceived in some way after all; most people would consider I had, so I said nothing even to our good landlady, in spite of her continued looks of enquiry at me the next morning, and, indeed, whenever we met. To forget it, however, was impossible. Throughout the succeeding day it haunted me, despite the diversion of wandering with my dear

mate up and about the slopes in the neighbourhood of our cottage, and the enjoyment of the fine air and sunshine, and the beauty of Nature so lavishly spread out on all hands.

"Supper-time again! and all going on with that strange and confusing repetition which, in peaceful lives, seems to substitute the affairs of yesterday so completely for those of to-day, that the mind momentarily loses count of the twenty-four hours elapsed. It might have been last night exactly, and we might have only just arrived, for aught of difference in our surroundings and doings. Only my wife is not so tired—the change of air is already telling beneficially, and she does not retire quite so soon. I am glad of this, for I have no relish for being again disturbed after the manner of last night; and when she goes upstairs I mean to do the same, and say so.

"'Why, Roderick,' cries she in surprise, 'I never knew you in such a hurry to go to bed before!'

"'The air is very strong,' I reply evasively; 'it makes one sleepy, I suppose.'

"'Well, you don't look sleepy.'

"'Ah, looks are deceptive, my dear; they have often deceived you with regard to your husband. For instance, you have always thought him a good-looking fellow, and there is no greater deception than that possible.'

"'You would not like me to say so,' says she; 'however, come along! It's quite time, past eleven—not country hours at all! I shall be glad of your company; this is a lonely spot, and quite eerie by night. I did not quite like coming upstairs alone last night, I promise you. Our old landlady and her maid have been abed an hour and more! How monotonously quiet everything is! I don't think I shall quite like it when there is no moon, but it is very beautiful now.'

"Thus gossiping we reach our room. Her last words are dictated by the flood of light streaming in at the bow-window, to which she has walked, and where she stands looking out upon the brilliant orb of night. The scent of the roses steals in with the silver rays, and for a moment she seems to be absolutely revelling in the sweetness and beauty.

"I have a restless desire to prevent her standing there. If, by any chance, that wandering form should come again! Why, it would scare the life out of her, were she to see it, as I did.

"'Very beautiful,' I say indifferently;



'but you had better not stay up now, and we must draw the curtains, or the light will be too strong for you.'

"'Yes,' she cries; 'it is not good to sleep in the rays of the moon, I have been told. What is the story? "The Vampire's Victim." I have read it somewhere. Ah, I remember, it was one of yours. I read it in one of the annuals, before I knew you! Oh, a horrible story! I wish I had not thought of it. Ah, what is that?'

"This sudden exclamation, in great alarm, startles and tells me the fatal truth. That haunting figure has caught her eye for a certainty! I am by her side on the instant. Clinging to me, and pointing towards the avenue, she says:

"'Surely there is someone in the garden! I am confident of it. I saw a white figure move towards the avenue.'

"'Nonsense! there is no one there,' I say reassuringly. 'Who should be? These hills are nearly deserted by day—and quite so by night.'

"'Oh, I am confident, Roderick,' she goes on, trembling from head to foot; 'it passed like a flash across the path, but I saw it distinctly. Oh! Who or what can it be?'

"All efforts at first to pacify her are in vain. Only very slowly can I persuade her to come away from the window, and induce her to believe she has been deceived. She does not—she will not believe it. I try and make the best of it, look forth boldly, and only speak the truth when I again and again declare there is no one to be seen. That my mind misgives me, however, and that I have little doubt she may have seen what I saw the previous night, can be guessed. If this really be the case, there at once is an end to our peace and comfort. If this sort of thing is to go on—if there really be some apparition haunting this nook in the hills, we shall have to leave our snug quarters forthwith. Tomorrow I determine there shall be no further concealment on my part. I will question Mrs. Burt; but for to-night my wife's rest is the first consideration, and I bend all efforts to bring that about.

"Long is it, however, ere there is any approach to success; but, finally, she is somewhat soothed, and preparing for sleep. The curtains of the window are closely drawn; not a sound is to be heard outside. I am nearly ready for bed myself, when, all in a moment, the panic is renewed by the distinct splash of gravel thrown up against the window.

"'There!' cries my wife; 'there is some one outside. I told you so!'

"'Impossible now to deny it. As I am about to draw the curtain back she continues:

"'Heavens, Roderick, what are you doing? Pray don't go to the window.' But, ere I can reply, more gravel tinkles against the glass.

"'Indeed I must,' I say; 'I must see who is there,' for I feel assured now this can be no ghostly manifestation, and perhaps the conviction lends me courage, and I am angry at the disturbance. Deaf to further remonstrance, back go the curtains, and open flies the casement.

"'Who's there?' I cry. The words have hardly passed my lips ere there is a flash below—a loud report. The glass is riddled by shot; one rakes my hair, another cuts my ear! Almost before I can realise this fact and step back into the room, a second report rings through the air, taking up the dying echo of the first. More window-panes are broken, the wood-work is torn away, but I am untouched.

"No attempt of mine can describe my wife's consternation, nor, for the matter of that, my own. She need not cling to me so closely, though. I have no intention again to expose myself to such outrage. Rousing the house is unnecessary, for the noise has done that, as may be judged in a minute or two by the arrival, in wild bewilderment, of Mrs. Burt.

"'Oh, sir, sir—what has happened? Why, you are bleeding!' This is true; the cut on my ear makes a great show, but I know there is no further hurt.

"Rapid and incoherent explanations, mingled with sobs from my wife, follow for a moment, but I say:

"'It is for you to explain, Mrs. Burt—for you to account for this alarming, unaccountable outrage. What thieves and ruffians are there hanging about these hills who could do this thing? There is a woman in it, too, or may be she is single-handed. I saw her last night flying about the place like a ghost; indeed, till now, I thought she had been one.'

"'Ah,' exclaims Mrs. Burt, astonished; 'she has seen you, then, has she? I reckoned if she did she would mark the resemblance, and she has been drawn on by it; it is most marvellous. But she, poor thing! would not have fired at you. Can it be that Evan, in one of his fits of vio—' Mrs. Burt breaks off. 'Stay,' she adds, 'let me see. Here,

Mary, Mary, bring me a cloak! I will go down;’ and the woman retreats to the maid-servant, standing with frightened face in the passage.

“To prolong here any details of the bewilderment and confusion incidental to this strange scene is quite out of the question. The well-founded fear that some personal attack upon myself had been made, and intended for me alone, is the conclusion which rushes through my brain at the landlady’s disjointed and mysterious references, though why, or wherefore, or what I have done to incur such animosity is beyond comprehension. But worse—may not the attack be renewed, when my escape might be less fortunate? This idea is increased by my wife’s strenuous efforts to prevent my moving from the spot, and her eagerness to lock the door.

“‘Wait, wait,’ she says; ‘do not move. Wait till the woman returns.’

“I remain as passive as I can. We can hear hurrying footsteps outside, and the voices of more than one man in hurried colloquy with the landlady. Presently they go away, and no sound, for a long while, comes through the open casement. We are both nearly dressed now, though neither dares—wisely, I think—to approach the window. Presently Mrs. Burt is returning. We hear her coming in and upstairs. When admitted to our room she cannot say much. Two post-boys, from the village inn, up late with their horses, had run up the hill to see what the matter was on hearing the report, and Mrs. Burt had told them, and then they had all gone away to Hay’s house, and though they could not find him or his sister, they felt sure he had done this.

“Who Hay was, why he should try to shoot me, and all the rest of the enigmas which the case presented here in the dead of night, were not likely to be answered or made clear. All this must stand over, we agreed, till the morrow, and all that could then be done was to try and wait for that morrow with what composure we could summon.

“The above has been noted down while fresh in my memory, knowing, as I do, the value of vivid impressions.”

#### CHAPTER II.

##### WHAT WAS IN THE OLD MAN’S MIND.

WHEN the aged yeoman finished reading the manuscript he leisurely referred to the date of the letting of the rooms to Mr.

Craven in the account-book. Then, after taking off his spectacles, quietly wiping them and laying them down, he wheeled round his chair to the fire, stirred it, took a long clay pipe from a recess in the chimney-corner, filled, and lighted it.

“Strange,” he said aloud, with the garrulity of years, as he began to puff, “how it takes me back to the old days. Fifty years at least since I looked at those papers, and nearly eighty since they were written; yet it all comes back to me as fresh as if it had happened but a month ago. Why do I keep them? All the actors have passed away, and I must soon follow, for I shall be ninety-five come Michaelmas—wonderful that I have been spared so long and to be so well—with all my faculties about me except in the matter of walking. No; I will keep them no longer; they shall be burnt to-night with the rest of the useless rubbish.” Then he lapsed into a silent reverie, and as we followed his old eyes over the faded writing, so will we now follow his mind over the events it vividly recalled.

The farmhouse he occupied had been his birthplace, and that of his father before him. It was situated in the valley, not far from the junction of the roads up to Bower Well, and the highway between Worcester and Hereford. He saw himself in his narrow, homely life learning his father’s trade of farming, and falling in love when he was about seventeen, like many another lad in the village, with the beautiful and strangely attractive Gwynneth Hay, then some three years older than himself, and as lovely a rustic maiden as might be seen in a day’s march. Delicate as far as features, hands, feet, and complexion were concerned, but tall, upright, strong, and healthy withal, she was a true specimen of what is called a nut-brown maid, or in simpler words, somewhat gipsy-looking. In character and mind, she was even more uncommon. Had she been born in a higher station of life, she would probably have shown those refinements of thought, feeling, and taste, out of which accomplished women are made and poetic and romantic characters woven. Her footfall was as light and elastic as a bird’s, and she appeared to skim over the ground rather than to walk. A dreamy creature at most times too, and she had a dreamy way of looking at you, the old man remembered as this picture of his early love came before him. Deeply religious, to the point of fanaticism, she

professed, though without ostentation, to have the gift of prophecy, being able, as she said, to foretell many things that would come to pass, because at times they all seemed to have happened before, and within her knowledge. Those who judged her only by others asserted that at times she was not quite in her right mind, but this had no deterrent effect on the love with which she inspired the rustic youth of the countryside. She lived with her brother Evan, in a house on the neighbouring Squire's estate, but situated in a deep copse on the slopes of those same Creedon Hills among which she was born, not far from the Bower Well. He was head-gamekeeper, bailiff, overseer, a sort of steward and general factotum to the Squire, and many years older than his sister. A trustworthy man in the main, but with a violent, ungovernable temper—occasionally increased by drink—which had more than once well-nigh cost him his post, and promised sooner or later to be his ruin. Gwynneth, nevertheless, was idolised by him since their mother's death, but like many men of his class, he took little heed of her movements or of the friends and acquaintances she made. Thus she fell in love and became engaged before he knew anything about it. But it was not with the farmer-lad that she fell in love, nor any of the other young Worcester-shire swains that came courting her glances. It would have been better for her if she had. No; she cast her affections upon a stranger—a certain Mr. Robert Cross, who made his appearance one summer in the character of a convalescent seeking health in the lodgings of Mrs. Burt of Bower Well, the guardian of that spring. He had been set down one afternoon by the Worcester coach at the corner of the road, and hearing that there were rooms to let near the well, wandered up there with his small valise and took them. He professed to be an Oxford student, though the landlady confided to her neighbours—the young farmer among them—that she thought he must be too old, "being nigh upon thirty by looks, which were in his favour every way, though." Still, as he paid a fortnight's rent in advance, and apparently had plenty of money, she was quite satisfied. Mystery, nevertheless, clung to him and his acts, for how he first knew Gwynneth, eventually became engaged to her, and accepted as her honourable suitor by her brother, no one ever rightly heard. At any rate the young farmer never knew,

or, if he did, that part of his retrospective reverie came not before him. His memory now only travelled back to the agony of mind he suffered, and the bitter indignation he felt when, after a year or more of absence and silence, it became only too plain that this Mr. Robert Cross had utterly deserted Gwynneth. A vision of the forlorn, disconsolate, and now truly half-witted girl flitting hither and thither among the woodland paths and up the hill-sides, arose vividly through the clouds from the old man's pipe, and even after those long, long years brought an angry frown to his otherwise placid brow, and made the gnarled and aged hand clench angrily. His fancy, however, followed the figure with such loving thoughts that his face soon resumed the calmness happily vouchsafed to his declining hours, but once more grew a little disturbed as he remembered the morning immediately succeeding that night in Bower Well Cottage, described by the manuscript; how he went to the cottage to verify the strange reports which had found their way down to the village and his father's farm. Stripling though he was at the time, he recollected how he had gone into good Mrs. Burt's comfortable kitchen or house-place, to find several neighbours eagerly discussing the events with her. Some suggested that the assailants must have been footpads or highwaymen, who had tracked the lady and gentleman to their rural lodgings, although why they should have been fired at was past understanding. The village blacksmith stuck to his opinion, however—he was sure it was robbers. They swarmed along the roads at that season when the quality were travelling to and from the Wells to drink the waters. Quite lately several carriages had been stopped between Oxford and Cheltenham, and he made no doubt the gentlemen of the road had found their way among these hills by now. Mrs. Burt shook her head; her ideas were quite different, she insisted, and when the constabulary came to hear of it, they would have to look nearer home, she expected. Still the blacksmith was obstinate and refused to give up his point.

"But have you seen my lodger?" she asked.

The man had not. He had been too busy to leave his forge. He should have enough to do if he watched all the visitors and people that came to the Wells at this season.

"Then you can't know nowt about it,"

answered the landlady. "Did you ever see that Mr. Robert Cross, as he called himself, as was here in my rooms a year and more ago?"

Yes; the worthy farrier remembered him well, he'd seen him many a time, walkin' with Gwynneth Hay, and healways said no good 'ud come o' that job; and for his part he'd like to catch sight of him now—that was all, and he'd give him a bit o' his, the farrier's, mind, if not a taste o' summut else.

At this moment there was a tap at the door of the kitchen communicating with the front of the house, and on its being opened there entered a gentleman, who struck all present but Mrs. Burt with amazement. As he stood for a minute in the shadow, a half-indignant murmur passed round the room.

The old yeoman set down his pipe and rubbed his eyes, as memory took him through that scene again.

"The likeness was startling," he muttered; "no wonder we were all deceived for the moment. We were sitting and standing round about the table between the wide open chimney and a low window opposite. Beside this window was the door giving upon the way down to the shed sheltering the well. Ah, I remember the weather of the preceding day had broken; heavy clouds made it very dark, and a thick, misty rain was clinging close to the hills. But the door was half open, for it was not cold. Before anybody spoke again, a shadow passed the window, further obscuring the murky light it admitted. Then the door was pushed open, and Gwynneth herself came in next moment. She was looking very beautiful as usual, though pale unto death, and her poor eyes more dazed and far-off looking than ever. She had only a white kerchief tied loosely over her head, beneath which streamed her nut-brown hair—alas! now a little streaked with silver. I see her plainly in a grey stuff gown, all besmirched and torn. Yes, and when she saw the gentleman, she walked straight up to him, exclaiming:

"Oh, Robert, at last we meet! Why have you been away so long, and never to have written! Speak to me, and tell me she is not your wife—she that I saw you with on the hills, and standing in the moonlight at the window? Tell me this, at least, if you have no more to say."

"I can hear her very voice as I think

of it," continued the veteran dreamer. "Yes; she held out her hand as if expecting him to take it. He turned, utterly bewildered, towards Mrs. Burt, who, now advancing, took poor Gwynneth's outstretched hand, and endeavoured to draw her aside.

"My dear," she said, 'come to me. You don't know this gentleman; he has never seen you before; you are quite mistaken. Come, let me take you home.'

"No, no," said the girl; "I am not mistaken. I will not go home without him; now he has come back, he must come home with me—it is his home too. If he does not, brother will be right; he said Robert had deserted me, but I knew better. Come, come!"

"But this gentleman is not Robert—your Robert," insisted Mrs. Burt, 'although so like him.'

"Oh, don't tell me that—he won't tell me that!" cried Gwynneth. 'He will not say anyone but himself gave me this as a token of his love, and bid me wear it for his sake.'

"She hastily undid the neck of her dress, and removed a thin silver chain necklace with a little coral hand hanging from it as a pendant. Directly the gentleman saw it as she held it towards him, he took it eagerly, crying in amazement:

"What! Who! How came you by this?" and then quickly to Mrs. Burt: 'What does it mean? Who is this poor, mad girl?'

"Gwynneth answered:

"You, Robert! You gave it me—you know you did!"

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed suddenly; 'I see it all! My wretched brother—and she has mistaken me for him; and so at first, I suppose, did you, Mrs. Burt, and that is why you looked at me so wonderingly. For we are—we were—greatly alike, and have often been mistaken. But when was he here, and what name did he pass by?'

All was hurry, confusion, astonishment. But the old man in his reverie recalled even the details vividly—so vividly as to be greatly moved as he remembered the effect of the discovery on Gwynneth, when they were able gradually to make her poor, bewildered mind understand something of the truth.

And that truth, simply put, was that the twin-brothers, Roderick and Robert Craven, though so marvellously alike in person, were absolutely opposite in



character. The first, an upright, honourable, accomplished gentleman; the second, a scampish, lying, untrustworthy, ne'er-do-well from his boyhood, but his mother's favourite, of course. The necklet had been hers, given to him on her death-bed. His family had heard nothing of him for three years—heard nothing of him ever again, so far as the old man knew.

Gwynneth had caught a glimpse of Roderick Craven through the window, as he sat writing, on the first night he arrived at Bower Well Cottage, and had tapped at the casement, but when he opened it, was afraid to speak so near the house, and therefore beckoned him to go forth. The next day she saw him walking with his wife, and was heartstricken—saw him again in the evening standing with the same woman at the window of the bedroom, in the moonlight. In her wild jealousy she had rushed home and told her brother. He, not quite sober, became furious, seized his double-barrelled gun, and, despite her entreaties, rushed through the garden of Bower Well Cottage, flung up the gravel, and—it was not difficult to fit it all together. Still, as the neighbourhood said, he might have been hanged for it—would have been, but for the clemency of Mr. Craven, for in those times hanging was common for far less offences.

The last vision of the past which the old yeoman saw through the smoke of one more pipe was the little mossy mound, with a stone cross at its head, nestling under the trees in the rural churchyard. As this died away into smoke with the rest, he gathered the contents of the old desk together—they had come into his possession nearly fifty years before, in his capacity of executor and administrator of good Mrs. Burt's little estate. He never knew how Roderick Craven, the author, happened to leave his manuscript behind him, but there it was among the rest of her effects. Now he glanced once more through some of its pages, and then consigning them to the flames, slowly watched the writing as it turned to ashes and fell in blackened, shapeless masses upon the hearthstone before which he sat.

## WAITING FOR ORDERS.

BY FREDERICK TALBOT.

In Pengelly Creek lies the *Princess Iris*, a smart and beautiful craft, finished and

adorned with a care that shows how she is valued by her captain and owners. Her taper masts, her fine spars, and the cobweb tracery of her rigging, catching at this moment a strong gleam of sunshine, stand out against dark masses of foliage; rugged, many-coloured crags; and the rude stone walls upon Pengelly Hill. Land-locked, calm, and placid are the waters of the creek, like those of some inland lake; but just round the point where fringing woods dip their branches into the tide, lies the broad expanse of Learmouth Harbour, where all the navies of Europe might ride at anchor.

But trim and handsome as is the ship, there is an aspect of solitude and desertion about her. No sailors are lounging about her decks or hanging from her rigging. Her crew, indeed, were paid off a month ago, and nobody knows when she will ship another, for times are bad, and freights are scarce, and thus the good ship lies in ballast waiting for orders. But the captain still lives on board; and, indeed, one could not desire better quarters than the handsomely-furnished house on deck which forms the captain's cabin; and the mate is there, too, in his cabin down below. But each lives apart, and has little to say to the other, and the man who cooks for them serves their meals separately at different hours of the day.

Just now, as the ship swings gently round in answer to the first movement of the tide, and as a soft breeze ripples the water, the captain comes out from his white house on deck, and gives a hail down the opening to the cabin:

"Hi, Pensilon! I'm going ashore."

Captain Carnew is a handsome young Cornishman, not a giant by any means, but well built and proportioned, with a bronzed and ruddy visage, and a good-humoured and yet determined expression. As the mate thrusts his head into the daylight, and looks about him, yawning, he presents a strong contrast to the sanguine captain. He is yellow and dark-eyed, with crisp, black curling hair, and his eyes gleam savagely as they rest upon his captain's spruce array.

"I shall go ashore, too, if you go," said the mate defiantly.

"When I come back you can go ashore," said the captain, in a voice that did not invite further discussion. And then he lowered himself deftly into a little dingey that lay alongside, and was soon out of sight round the bend of the creek.

There the hill rose still more pre-

answered the landlady. "Did you ever see that Mr. Robert Cross, as he called himself, as was here in my rooms a year and more ago?"

Yes; the worthy farrier remembered him well, he'd seen him many a time, walkin' with Gwynneth Hay, and healways said no good 'ud come o' that job; and for his part he'd like to catch sight of him now—that was all, and he'd give him a bit of his, the farrier's, mind, if not a taste o' summut else.

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The old yeoman set down his pipe and rubbed his eyes, as memory took him through that scene again.

"The likeness was startling," he muttered; "no wonder we were all deceived for the moment. We were sitting and standing round about the table between the wide open chimney and a low window opposite. Beside this window was the door giving upon the way down to the shed sheltering the well. Ah, I remember the weather of the preceding day had broken; heavy clouds made it very dark, and a thick, misty rain was clinging close to the hills. But the door was half open, for it was not cold. Before anybody spoke again, a shadow passed the window, further obscuring the murky light it admitted. Then the door was pushed open, and Gwynneth herself came in next moment. She was looking very beautiful as usual, though pale unto death, and her poor eyes more dazed and far-off looking than ever. She had only a white kerchief tied loosely over her head, beneath which streamed her nut-brown hair—alas! now a little streaked with silver. I see her plainly in a grey stuff gown, all besmirched and torn. Yes, and when she saw the gentleman, she walked straight up to him, exclaiming:

"Oh, Robert, at last we meet! Why have you been away so long, and never to have written! Speak to me, and tell me she is not your wife—she that I saw you with on the hills, and standing in the moonlight at the window! Tell me this, at least, if you have no more to say."

"I can hear her very voice as I think

of it," continued the veteran dreamer. "Yes; she held out her hand as if expecting him to take it. He turned, utterly bewildered, towards Mrs. Burt, who, now advancing, took poor Gwynneth's outstretched hand, and endeavoured to draw her aside.

"My dear," she said, 'come to me. You don't know this gentleman; he has never seen you before; you are quite mistaken. Come, let me take you home.'

"No, no," said the girl; "I am not mistaken. I will not go home without him; now he has come back, he must come home with me—it is his home too. If he does not, brother will be right; he said Robert had deserted me, but I knew better. Come, come!"

"But this gentleman is not Robert—your Robert," insisted Mrs. Burt, 'although so like him.'

"Oh, don't tell me that—he won't tell me that!" cried Gwynneth. 'He will not say anyone but himself gave me this as a token of his love, and bid me wear it for his sake.'

"She hastily undid the neck of her dress, and removed a thin silver chain necklace with a little coral hand hanging from it as a pendant. Directly the gentleman saw it as she held it towards him, he took it eagerly, crying in amazement:

"What! Who! How came you by this?" and then quickly to Mrs. Burt: 'What does it mean? Who is this poor, mad girl?'

"Gwynneth answered:

"You, Robert! You gave it me—you know you did!"

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed suddenly; 'I see it all! My wretched brother—and she has mistaken me for him; and so at first, I suppose, did you, Mrs. Burt, and that is why you looked at me so wonderingly. For we are—we were—greatly alike, and have often been mistaken. But when was he here, and what name did he pass by?'

All was hurry, confusion, astonishment. But the old man in his reverie recalled even the details vividly—so vividly as to be greatly moved as he remembered the effect of the discovery on Gwynneth, when they were able gradually to make her poor, bewildered mind understand something of the truth.

And that truth, simply put, was that the twin-brothers, Roderick and Robert Craven, though so marvellously alike in person, were absolutely opposite in

character. The first, an upright, honourable, accomplished gentleman; the second, a scampish, lying, untrustworthy, ne'er-do-well from his boyhood, but his mother's favourite, of course. The necklet had been hers, given to him on her death-bed. His family had heard nothing of him for three years—heard nothing of him ever again, so far as the old man knew.

Gwynneth had caught a glimpse of Roderick Craven through the window, as he sat writing, on the first night he arrived at Bower Well Cottage, and had tapped at the casement, but when he opened it, was afraid to speak so near the house, and therefore beckoned him to go forth. The next day she saw him walking with his wife, and was heartstricken—saw him again in the evening standing with the same woman at the window of the bedroom, in the moonlight. In her wild jealousy she had rushed home and told her brother. He, not quite sober, became furious, seized his double-barrelled gun, and, despite her entreaties, rushed through the garden of Bower Well Cottage, flung up the gravel, and—it was not difficult to fit it all together. Still, as the neighbourhood said, he might have been hanged for it—would have been, but for the clemency of Mr. Craven, for in those times hanging was common for far less offences.

The last vision of the past which the old yeoman saw through the smoke of one more pipe was the little mossy mound, with a stone cross at its head, nestling under the trees in the rural churchyard. As this died away into smoke with the rest, he gathered the contents of the old desk together—they had come into his possession nearly fifty years before, in his capacity of executor and administrator of good Mrs. Burt's little estate. He never knew how Roderick Craven, the author, happened to leave his manuscript behind him, but there it was among the rest of her effects. Now he glanced once more through some of its pages, and then consigning them to the flames, slowly watched the writing as it turned to ashes and fell in blackened, shapeless masses upon the hearthstone before which he sat.

#### WAITING FOR ORDERS.

BY FREDERICK TALBOT.

IN Pengelly Creek lies the *Princess Iris*, a smart and beautiful craft, finished and

adorned with a care that shows how she is valued by her captain and owners. Her taper masts, her fine spars, and the cobweb tracery of her rigging, catching at this moment a strong gleam of sunshine, stand out against dark masses of foliage; rugged, many-coloured crags; and the rude stone walls upon Pengelly Hill. Land-locked, calm, and placid are the waters of the creek, like those of some inland lake; but just round the point where fringing woods dip their branches into the tide, lies the broad expanse of Larmouth Harbour, where all the navies of Europe might ride at anchor.

But trim and handsome as is the ship, there is an aspect of solitude and desertion about her. No sailors are lounging about her decks or hanging from her rigging. Her crew, indeed, were paid off a month ago, and nobody knows when she will ship another, for times are bad, and freights are scarce, and thus the good ship lies in ballast waiting for orders. But the captain still lives on board; and, indeed, one could not desire better quarters than the handsomely-furnished house on deck which forms the captain's cabin; and the mate is there, too, in his cabin down below. But each lives apart, and has little to say to the other, and the man who cooks for them serves their meals separately at different hours of the day.

Just now, as the ship swings gently round in answer to the first movement of the tide, and as a soft breeze ripples the water, the captain comes out from his white house on deck, and gives a hail down the opening to the cabin:

"Hi, Pensilon! I'm going ashore."

Captain Carnew is a handsome young Cornishman, not a giant by any means, but well built and proportioned, with a bronzed and ruddy visage, and a good-humoured and yet determined expression. As the mate thrusts his head into the daylight, and looks about him, yawning, he presents a strong contrast to the sanguine captain. He is yellow and dark-eyed, with crisp, black curling hair, and his eyes gleam savagely as they rest upon his captain's spruce array.

"I shall go ashore, too, if you go," said the mate defiantly.

"When I come back you can go ashore," said the captain, in a voice that did not invite further discussion. And then he lowered himself deftly into a little dingey that lay alongside, and was soon out of sight round the bend of the creek.

There the hill rose still more pre-

cipitously, and its summit was crowned by an old ruined tower, known as Pengelly Castle, while just below, in a little clearing among the woods, stood the tiny church of St. Keo, with a pathway up to it from the creek, and a little landing-place with steps almost hidden by moss and weeds.

Here Harry Carnew moored his skiff, and then he sprang with vigorous footsteps up the hill, to where a little spring by the churchyard-wall filled a mossy basin, and trickled down the hillside, its course almost hidden by a luxuriant growth of ferns and bright-leaved ivy. This was the wishing-well of St. Keo, and by its margin stood a tall and slender young woman, gazing into the pellucid water, and so much occupied with her incantation that she did not hear the approaching footsteps. And thus Master Harry stole quietly upon her, and, putting his head over the girl's shoulder, saw reflected in the little basin the dark and glowing face of Iris Grade in close proximity to his own manly features. The girl, of course, saw the same reflection, and gave a start and a little scream; but next moment her wrist was firmly clasped, and a round dozen of kisses put all illusion to flight.

"Oh, Harry, you clumsy fellow!" cried Iris, untwining herself deftly from the young man's embrace. "Why, you've spoilt the charm! I really did believe in St. Keo just for a minute."

"St. Keo's all right," said the captain. "You were looking to see your future husband's face, dear, and you saw him. Though, after all," his face clouding over, "what reason had you to be in doubt about the matter?"

"Oh, there is terrible doubt," said Iris, "and that is why I asked you to meet me here. But, first of all, where is Pensilon?"

"Why, on board, of course," replied Carnew, chafing at the question; "what matters about him?"

"Why, you know," began Iris coaxingly, "how fond he has always been of me. Now, don't get in a rage, Harry; you know I don't care for him; but still I feel a little sorry for him because, don't you see, Harry, before I knew you I think I used—what you might call to flirt with him."

"I make no doubt of it, my girl," said Harry dryly. "Well, and now?"

"Well, now, you know, dear Harry, that papa is somewhat in a fix—"

"Well, that's not my fault, anyhow," said Harry gloomily. "I've always done

him justice with my Princess—she is a charming Princess, isn't she?" he cried, snatching a kiss from the radiant face that was so near his just then.

"She is a beautiful ship, Harry," rejoined Iris, ignoring the personal application of his words. "But think of the old Princess, the deserted, miserable old thing lying there in Bool River. Come, Harry; I'll race you up to the tower to have a look at her."

And Iris, forgetting all troubles for the time, darting away, ran lightly up the tangled pathway with Captain Harry close behind her; and they reached the summit of the hill, and the foot of the old tower that crowned the height, almost at the same moment. From this point a charming view was spread out before them. On one side Pengelly Creek, with the one tall ship lying there at anchor, and on the other the Bool River winding placidly among the wooded heights. In front lay the broad expanse of Learmouth Harbour sparkling in the sunshine, and dotted with the sails of innumerable craft, while beyond was seen the dark headland and the low sandspit, with its black, grim-looking forts, and farther still the sea-horizon, almost lost in a soft summer haze. But the object that most interested the lovers was an old black hulk that lay just beneath them in a little bay formed by the river—a hulk that had lain there many years. The story went that she had belonged to an old sea-captain, who had sailed her on his own account till both ship and captain wearing out and growing old, they had anchored for the last time in Bool River. Without money to refit his ship, and having outlived all friends who could help him, the old captain was found one morning hanging in his cabin, dead and cold; and from that time everybody had avoided the old hulk, which had been called the Princess in her sea-going days. And now she belonged to Stephen Grade, of Pengelly Castle, the father of Iris, and was used as a sort of floating lumber-room and receptacle of old stores.

But what now attracted the attention of the young people, was the unexpected sight of a large man-o-war's boat manned, if the expression is allowable, by a crew of boys from the training ship in the harbour, while in the stern were several naval officers, who appeared to be scrutinising the old Princess with more attention than she was in the habit of receiving.

"But surely," and Iris, as, shading her



eyes with her hands, she looked down into the boat, "surely, Harry, that is Pensilon who is steering. I wonder if he can see us." And Iris shrank back into the shadow of the tower.

"Yes, it is Pensilon!" cried Harry angrily. "And against my orders. I'll let him know who's the master!"

"Now you stop here, Harry," said Iris coaxingly. "You often say there is no discipline in harbour. No doubt Captain Fluke picked him up to pilot his boat up the river, for you must own, Harry, that nobody knows the ins and outs of our river like Frank."

It was soon evident that the boat was making for the landing-place by Pengelly Castle—not the old ruin, it must be noted, but the grey manor-house that lay sheltered in the woods by the river, and that bore the name of its more ancient predecessor on the heights. That there had been a family of Grades at Pengelly from the days of the Crusades might be read in old county histories, but the name had been unknown there for a couple of centuries at least, when Stephen Grade, who had made a fortune by trade in South America, came and bought the place. There was little dignity attached to the ownership of Pengelly Castle, for the domains were only a few dozen acres of rocks and woodland, and Stephen Grade had no ambition in the way of social distinction. His fortune was chiefly invested in shipping, and he had done something to add to the prosperity of Learmouth Harbour and town. His ships, which were mostly sailing-craft and in the South American trade, called at Learmouth for orders, and most of his captains were of the west-country race. One of his favourite commanders was Henry Carnew, of an old seafaring line, whose forefathers may have fought and plundered under Drake and Frobisher—one of the youngest of sea-captains afloat, but who perhaps owed some part of his rapid advancement to having means of his own and being part-owner of the vessel he commanded, which was altogether a smarter craft and fitted up with more luxurious appointments than the general run of trading-ships.

At the request of Stephen Grade, Captain Carnew had taken on board as mate, Frank Pensilon, whose uncle was a rich Liverpool merchant, to whom Grade was under obligations. Captain and mate had got on well together while at sea, but the month they had passed in idleness in

Pengelly Creek had strained their relations terribly. They were rivals for the affections of Iris Grade, and the captain's success in that matter had filled the heart of his subordinate with the gall of jealousy and bitter hatred. Captain Carnew, as the winner in the race, could afford to be more magnanimous, but his temper was continually tried by the provocations thrown in his way by Pensilon, who burned to find some pretext for revenging himself on the man who had supplanted him, as he considered, in the affections of Iris Grade.

When Iris told her lover the real state of affairs, how her father, whose ships had been a loss to him of late, could not carry on his adventures without the help of the elder Pensilon, who had already advanced him money, and that this help was only to be forthcoming if Iris consented to marry young Frank, Captain Carnew was almost beside himself with anger. To meet young Pensilon, and decide the matter by wager of battle was his first impulse; but Iris contrived to detain him at their trysting-place till the man-o'-war's boat had once more put into the river with Pensilon on board, and all danger of an immediate meeting was at an end. And then Iris was quite willing that Harry should go and have it out with her father. And they made their way to the house together.

Stephen Grade was sitting in his library writing when Harry Carnew burst in upon him like a whirlwind.

At the sight of Stephen Grade, Captain Carnew involuntarily moderated his bearing. Here was a man he had always looked up to, almost venerated, and whom he had always found a true friend. Why should he doubt him now?

Mr. Grade gave Harry a hand without speaking a word, being gravely immersed, it seemed, in some intricate calculation. And Harry stood silently by his side till Mr. Grade's face relaxed from its strained pre-occupation, and turned to him with a smile of welcome.

"Harry, my boy, I've been thinking of you, writing of you, but not to much purpose. I've no orders yet for you."

"I wasn't thinking so much of that, Squire," said Harry. "Of course in a general way I should be glad to get a cargo and sailing-orders, but now I'm thinking most about Iris and our engagement."

"And the obstacles in the way of it—well, I've been thinking of them too. By the way, Frank Pensilon was here just now, with a lot of naval fellows, and what do

you think? The Admiralty want to buy the old Princess—just to blow her to bits, I fancy; but I don't like to part with the old girl, somehow. They are away up the Bool River now, to lay down their stations for torpedoes and so on, and as Frank knows so much about the river, I offered to lend him to them for a few days, subject to his captain's approbation, of course."

"As far as that goes," said Carnew doggedly, "I should be glad to be rid of the fellow altogether."

"Between ourselves, so should I," replied Mr. Grade, sinking his voice. "But what are we to do? There's his uncle—uncle, indeed! I believe he's really Frank's father—but, anyhow, he wants Frank to settle down, and join him in the business. Frank vows he won't settle down without my girl. I must have six thousand at once to carry on with, or else sell all my ships and settle down in the workhouse. Old Pensilon is the only fellow who will lend me the money, and he won't lend it unless I help him with Frank. Now there's the whole kettle of fish boiled down into the compass of a sauce-ladle."

Mr. Grade had made the matter clear, anyhow. And Captain Carnew felt that if the Squire's enterprise came to a bad end, it would be a terrible misfortune for the whole countryside. How many sailors would be thrown out of employment, with little chance of finding anything else to do; for what is the use of a good seaman on board a steamer? And the same might be said of the sea-captains. Grade's doctrine had always been that sails would pay better than steam in the long run—just as canals pay better than railways—for carrying heavy merchandise, and he had kept together perhaps the last relics of good English seamanship—a sort of Old Guard, as it were—and if these were lost, all was lost. And with this in his mind, it was impossible for the captain to say, in a light-hearted way:

"Give me your daughter, and let the whole concern go to smash."

"I would lend you the money myself, Squire——" began the captain.

"If you had it," interrupted Mr. Grade. "I know you would, Harry; but I know, too, that as long as your mother lives you can't touch your money. And I wouldn't advise you to either. It's a risky business, and if the business doesn't mend, my whole fleet won't be worth an old brass kettle. Why, I tell you, Harry, that your Princess is the only ship that has brought me in a

penny these two years. Ah, if I had only a few more such ships, and a few more such captains! Why, that run you made from Valparaiso, when you licked the mail-steamer by twenty-four hours—why, the country rings with it!"

"Ah, that wasn't a bad run," said the captain modestly; "but then what a wind I had all the way!"

At this moment a bell rang softly in an adjoining room, and shortly after a youth brought in a telegram, which had just been read off from Mr. Grade's private wire. Mr. Grade put on a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, and read over the message to himself with much deliberation.

"This concerns you more than me, Harry," he said, as he handed the paper over to the captain.

The message was from a well-known firm of ship-brokers in London.

"Client will give six thousand for Princess Iris, delivered at Antwerp within seven days. Money lodged with us. Reply immediately."

"What, sell the Princess—part with my ship?" cried Captain Carnew. "Oh, Squire, you would never have me do that!"

"No, I wouldn't, Harry," replied Mr. Grade warmly. "Stick to your ship, lad; she's the best wife a seaman can have."

"But to give up Iris! Oh no, Squire; I couldn't keep the ship at that price. And six thousand pounds! It's the very money we want."

"It's only three thousand apiece, after all," said Mr. Grade. "Just half what I want."

"Oh, take it all, Squire. Do you think I'd stand on a few thousands with a man who has been the friend that you have? Take the money, Squire, and give me Iris. And we'll build another ship."

The Squire would not hear of this at first, but he came round after a while. There was the castle, after all, and the land belonging to it, that he had settled upon his daughter some years before; and that would be some compensation for her future husband, if he should lose his money. But even then, Mr. Grade could not quite see his way. He had in a manner pledged himself to old Pensilon, and it would never do to offend a man who had so much of the South American trade in his hands.

"Tell you what, Harry," said the Squire, after pondering deeply. "You might be wicked enough to run away with the girl, even to get a licence, and so meet quietly

at St. Keo's Church; get spliced, slip on board, and away to Antwerp before anybody finds you out. I shall be in a deuce of a rage, Harry, if you do."

There was long and earnest consultation after this, but in the end all was settled, and a message returned to the brokers:

"Terms accepted. Carnew sees you to-morrow."

Harry Carnew had a full week's work cut out for him when he left Pengelly Castle, having first with some difficulty obtained Iris's consent to this hasty and half-secret marriage. First he had to run up to London to arrange for the transfer of the ship. And finding his way to the City into one of the busy arcades of shipping-offices about Fenchurch Street, he had a long interview with the head of the firm who were conducting the purchase. And here, for the first time, he was made aware that the transaction must be conducted with some prudence and secrecy. A revolution or civil war was going on in a small South American Republic, and one of the contending parties was anxious to secure a fast-sailing ship as a cruiser. The qualities of the Princess Iris were well known over there, and hence the liberal offer for her purchase.

Now, there was nothing illegal in this transaction; but, at the same time, it was quite possible that, if the authorities came to hear of it, they might, in dread of another Alabama business, lay an embargo on the ship, and thus put an end to the bargain. And so Captain Carnew, disregarding all possible amusements in London, went back to Learmouth by the next train; now with his heart thoroughly engaged to bring this matter to a successful conclusion, the spice of risk about the affair having warmed him to the work. As soon as the Princess was sold, he would give orders for a new ship on the same lines to be laid down in the old building-yard of Learmouth. Once more the carpenters' hammers and the adzes of the shipbuilders should be heard in the old port, and many a now bare household would be replenished, and work and wages would go merrily together all through the winter that was coming.

But when the captain got back to Learmouth he found the whole town agog with excitement. The Fleet was coming—the whole Channel Fleet. There was to be something like a night attack on the harbour; mines were to be exploded, and a hulk was to be attacked by torpedo-boats and sent to the bottom. But this hulk

was not to be the old Princess, after all. No; Squire Grade would not part with her, said the loafers by the quay, with some pride. Where should he put his old boots, Stephen had asked, if they took away his store-ship?

"I'm looking out for you, cap'en," said a grizzled old salt, as Carnew made his way to the quay, past a long row of idlers, who were watching the movements of the shipping, and most of whom had a word or two to say to him. "Got the Gem alongside, to take you across to the Castle. The Squire wants to see you most particular."

Now, the Gem was a little steamer belonging to Mr. Grade, and was something between a yacht and a tug, and doing duty in both capacities. Soon she was threading her way among the craft lying at anchor, among which were now a number of Government vessels flying the white ensign of St. George, while a German despatch-boat and a French corvette, which had, no doubt, come to see the fun, hung out their national emblems, and boats manned by bluejackets, with a sprinkling of gold-laced officers among them, were darting about in all directions. But soon the harbour was crossed, and the steamer ascended the winding channel of the Bool River, and the grey and weathered façade of the old Squire's house came in sight, backed by a luxuriant screen of foliage, against which blue columns of smoke rose from the twisted chimney-shafts of the hospitable manor. As the Gem passed the old Princess, Hiram, the old salt just alluded to, who was in charge of the wheel, called the captain's attention to the altered appearance of the hulk.

"Governor's given the old gal a coat of paint, you see, cap'en."

True enough, the old lady looked quite smart with a streak of white paint all round her, which gave her a resemblance to the younger Princess that still lay in the creek on the other side of the hill.

By the strip of silver-sand that formed the landing-place to the house lay a man-of-war's boat, her crew arranged in easy attitudes upon the thwarts, some reading, some smoking, and others sleeping, as tranquilly as the tricks of their more wakeful companions would allow.

"The Squire's got company," explained Hiram laconically, and, indeed, on reaching the lawn, the captain found it occupied by a group of tennis-players, conspicuous among whom was Iris, in a charming costume,

and as gay as if she had nothing but festivity on her mind. The captain squeezed her disengaged hand in passing, and received a bright comprehending glance. Pensilon, who was among the players, watched the pair with jealous eyes.

"Have we got our orders yet, captain?" he asked with something like a sneer.

But the Squire was sitting apart in his favourite seat under his favourite cedar, and beckoned the captain to him, and they were soon in deep conference together.

"All we've got to do," said the Squire in conclusion, "is to keep our tongues between our teeth. Above all, we must not let Pensilon suspect anything unusual, or he'll clap a stopper on our tackle. He's watching us now out of the corners of his eyes."

The captain, however, had too much to do to stay and gossip with the Squire. He had to run up to the cathedral town to get a licence for the marriage. He must see the parson of St. Keo, who was a cousin of his, and who might be trusted; and then he had to get together a scratch crew for the voyage to Antwerp.

There was not much difficulty in this last part of the business, for plenty of seamen were hanging about, and glad of a spell of employment. But the mischief of it was that it somehow got abroad that there was more than met the eye in this short trip to Antwerp, and that resolute, adventurous seamen, who did not mind a risky job, might expect to be taken on for a further cruise with high wages, and possible prize-money. Who had set this abroad the captain could not imagine, unless some secret agent of the proposed purchasers were at work. But it was in vain that the captain disclaimed any knowledge of such possible adventures; his disclaimers were received with respectful winks of perfect understanding, and the captain, to his dismay, found the shipping-office where he was engaging his crew, besieged by a number of seamen who might be good at their work, but who were evidently of dissolute lives and of dangerous character. However, for such a short voyage the character of his crew did not matter very much, and if it really happened that they should take service under a foreign flag, the loss to their own country would not be serious.

With all this business on his hands Captain Carnew had been unable to visit his Iris for four-and-twenty hours, and when the morning came which had been

fixed for the secret marriage, Harry repaired to the trysting-place, which was old Pengelly Tower, with many feelings of misgiving. All was ready in the little church below; the clerk was there, and the clerk's wife, and old Hiram, who was to give the bride away, and the parson was walking about in his garden, ready to assume his surplice as soon as the wedding-procession appeared in sight. But would she come, without whose presence all this preparation would be thrown away? Harry waited on the top of the hill, fuming and fretting, and quite unconscious of the beautiful scene around him, for eleven o'clock had long struck, even by the asthmatic old clock of St. Keo, which was always half an hour behindhand.

At last, however, Harry saw the flutter of a garment through a break in the trees, and there was Iris sure enough, but with a terribly sad and tear-stained face. She had been upset altogether, she answered in reply to Harry's tender, despairing attempts to comfort her. First of all, to have to steal away like this! and then she had had a terrible scene that morning with Frank Pensilon! He had come over early, in a very excited state, had waylaid her in the garden, and overwhelmed her with reproaches. She had ruined his life, and now he was desperate and did not care what he did. But on this he was determined: if he could not have her, nobody else should; and if she dared to marry the captain, her bridegroom should never see the morrow of his wedding-day.

The captain pronounced this all idle, empty talk, but let Iris come with him, and in half an hour she would have one entitled to protect her, who would soon dispose of half-a-dozen such bragging fellows. And Iris, looking up at his determined yet tender face, seemed to think he was right, and they hurried on to the church. The ceremony was soon over. Almost before they knew it had fairly begun, it was over. And they walked up the hill together, man and wife, dazed and half-intoxicated by the feelings of their new relationship. But at the tower they were to part till midnight, when Harry, with a boat's crew, would be ready to receive his princess at the landing-place, and to take her on board his ship, which would sail as soon as they got on board. Even now his boat was waiting for him by the steps, and he must get on board at once, for the Princess was to drop quietly down with the tide to an anchorage just within the



harbour-bar. There she would take in the rest of her crew, and then, just before the first hour of the morning, the Gem, with her steam up, would range alongside and tow the Princess out into the open sea. And then, if the wind held, and it seemed steadily fixed in the west, they would be off the coast of France before the morning was far advanced; and in thirty-six hours, if Harry knew how to handle his ship, they would be off the Scheldt, where a steamer would meet them, and then a telegram to the brokers would put the sum of six thousand pounds at the disposal of Squire Grade.

Yes, it all seemed very straightforward, Iris acknowledged with sighs and involuntary tears, but still she could not shake off the feeling that something was going to happen, and that Pensilon would do some harm to Harry.

The Princess dropped down to her new berth by the harbour-mouth without exciting any attention, for everybody was watching the movements of the war-vessels; and when the captain had got his crew on board, and set them to work to make things taut and comfortable for the voyage, he would have no more communication with the shore.

The night came on dark and gloomy, with driving showers, just as two or three ironclad cruisers came up and anchored in the roadstead. It was not the halycon kind of a night that a lover might have chosen for his bridal, but it was a favourable night for slipping quietly away. At about nine o'clock, when it was growing pitchy dark, the Gem ran alongside, and old Hiram came on board, and was presently closeted with the captain.

"They've got warning to stop the ship, cap'n," said Hiram slowly, but with a twinkle of enjoyment in his eye; "telegram came an hour ago: 'Watch the Princess Iris; not to leave the port, but avoid a seizure.' I had it word for word from a true friend."

Hiram winked and screwed his face up into a knot with suppressed glee.

"There's nothing to grin about, man," said the captain testily, for he was a good deal worried by the news. "Why, they are watching us now, I expect. We shall never get away."

"That's the beautifulest part of the business," cried Hiram. "They hadn't noticed you had changed your berth, cap'n, and they've sent a boat's crew to watch Pengelly Creek. I heard 'em coming up in the gloaming. 'Oh, it's all right,' says

one, 'there's her anchor-light, and there she swings.'"

"But there would be no light there," cried the captain.

"That's the beauty of it again, sir," replied the sailor in full enjoyment of his story. Soon as you'd vacated your berth, says the Squire to me, 'Tow the old Princess round to the young 'un's moorings.' As was done, sir, and there she lies at this blessed moment, and a armed boat's crew a watching her as a cat watches a mouse, all in the dripping wet—a kind of ambush, you may call it."

Captain Harry was obliged to join in the old salt's roar of laughter. But the matter was still serious enough. It was out of the question now to take a boat to the creek to bring Iris to the ship. But the Bool River was open, and the best plan would be to take the Gem round to the house and bring Iris away, even from the midst of her guests, and then up anchor and away.

The Gem flew rapidly across the channel, and presently the bright lights from the house were seen reflected in the river, while the music of an inspiring waltz floated across the water. A cluster of boats and launches were lying off the landing-place, for most of the Squire's guests had come by water. The rain had ceased, and in this sheltered bay the wind was little felt, and now coloured lamps were being lighted all over the grounds, giving the little nook the appearance of a place in fairyland.

Hiram undertook to find out Miss Grade, and deliver the captain's message that she must come aboard without a moment's delay. But time went on, and the messenger did not return; so Harry himself strode up towards the house to claim his bride. But half-way up the path he met Iris hurrying to meet him, wrapped up in a thick cloak, but otherwise in her evening costume.

"Oh, Harry," she cried, throwing her arms about him, "I could not get away. Frank would not leave me—he is following me now."

And, indeed, at this moment Pensilon came up to them.

"You scoundrel!" he cried, seeing the captain holding Iris in his arms. "You would entice the girl from her father's house. Come back, Iris—leave this villain!"

"Oh, hush, Frank!" cried Iris, turning upon him. "I am his wife."

Frank Pensilon fell back a pace or two, his face convulsed with passion.

"His wife!" he cried. "He shall have little to boast of!"

And with this he threw himself upon the captain, a knife gleaming in his hand.

Iris shrieked, and one or two seamen, who were waiting by the shore, sprang forward, but would have been too late to avert the tragedy. Hiram, however, was just behind, having kept Miss Grade in sight all the time, and seizing Frank's arm before he had time to strike, he disarmed him in a moment, and stretched him on his back upon the sward. And then Harry Carnew hurried his bride on board the *Gem*, and Hiram, having given his adversary a good shaking to incapacitate him for the moment, followed them on board, and seizing the cord of the steam-whistle, let forth a rousing whistle expressive of triumph and satisfaction.

It seemed as if this manifestation from the *Gem* had aroused all the slumbering forces of the deep. A gun bellowed loudly over the waters, its echoes thundering back from every hill and crag; then another and another, while rocket after rocket could be seen soaring into the sky. In a moment everything was bustle and activity in the little cove. Seamen came hurrying down from the house where they had been punishing the Squire's home-brewed, and flirting with the pretty maids. Then a swarm of young officers came laughing and scampering down the path, taking hurried farewells, and exchanging flying jests with their suddenly-bereaved partners. Then there was nothing to be heard but the rattle of oars and the sharp words of command, as boat after boat took its load and shot rapidly into the stream.

Iris had clung to her husband's arm, convinced, in the agitation of the moment, that this was nothing but the hue-and-cry after Harry and herself. But Captain Carnew laughed heartily at the notion as the *Gem* scudded rapidly down the stream, and as he held his Iris safe in his arms:

"'Tis a night surprise, my girl," he said with a kiss. "And now, you see, Master Frank has done his worst, and where are we!"

"Not out of port yet," murmured Iris in reply.

After the first note of alarm all was quiet for a time, and the *Gem* sped on her way, and brought up under the lee of the Princess Iris without having been challenged on the way. And now there was not a

moment to be lost, for it was evident from lights glittering here and there, and signals exchanged by flashes from the ships, that a cordon of boats was being established across the harbour-mouth. And presently the Princess Iris was bathed in light, every rope and spar standing out distinctly against the dark night as the beams from a powerful electric-lamp searched the waters to and fro.

"Ship ahoy!" cried an authoritative voice from a venomous-looking torpedo craft that came up alongside; "you'd better get out of this."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Captain Harry; "that's just what I'm trying to do."

"Outward bound, are you?" cried the officer in reply. "Then heave a line on board and we'll run you out."

This was too good an offer to be refused, as the tide was still running in, and the *Gem* was barely powerful enough to stem it with a big ship in tow. But the powerful Government boat made nothing of the business, and threatening her way among the monsters at anchor in the roadstead, cast off the Princess when she was clear of the British Fleet, while her sails, rising like a cloud, were soon filled with the spanking breeze, before which she ran merrily up the Channel.

The captain and his wife spent their honeymoon happily enough seeing the sights of Antwerp, and cruising about the odd places on the Scheldt. It was not long before Iris had a letter from her father, in reply to her first hurried note signed "Iris Carnew".

"Tell Harry that the money was all right, and everything satisfactory. I forgive you, my children, and wish you every happiness. This is at the intercession of old Pensilon, who is staying with me, and firmly believes that Iris ran away from her indignant papa. Master Frank has put his foot into it nicely, for old Pen, it seems, was the real purchaser of the Princess, which, I fancy, he has made a good thing of. And when he found out that Frank had peached about her, and tried to get her stopped, you may fancy how he took it. Anyhow, Frank is to be shipped to Valparaiso, to keep a dry-goods store. Old P. and I have just been laying down the keel of the new ship, to the tune of a dozen of champagne. She must be the Queen Iris, to avoid confusion, and old P. promises to find a cargo for her every voyage. So, once she is finished, Harry will not have long to wait for orders."

## THE LAST WHALER.

By SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

As' so they can't spare space for her to rot,  
 I'd had a thowt they would ha' let her be  
 For sake of the old days they've all forgot,  
 An' we might pass together, her an' me—  
 Me, to my sleep up 'mid them crowding graves,  
 An' her, to better rest, aneath the waves.

But there—the river's nigh choked up wi' all  
 Them ugly steamboats as ha' made sike deed,  
 Wi' their red sides, like a great iron wall,  
 An' their black funnels, promising o' speed;  
 There's many a chap as put his hard-earned brass  
 I' them, an' hungered for his pains, alas!

An' times are hard; an' they will do to sell  
 The timbers that ha' braved the Arctic seas,  
 When she went dancing o'er the ocean swell,  
 Wi' all her canvas given to the breeze;  
 There's none so many left frev' those old days,  
 To tell her story while she feeds the blaze.

I wer' a proud chap, when as specksioneer,  
 I trod her deck, the gallant Northern Star,  
 As she went gliding past the crowded pier,  
 An' clove the breakers surging on the bar;  
 I mind how Nancy looked, so fresh an' fair,  
 Wi' my blue ribbon in her golden hair,

Waving her little hand, while tears ran over,  
 Yet couldn't wash the dimpling smile away;  
 You see she didn't care to send her lover,  
 Without a cheer upon the parting day;  
 An' we had pledged our words as we'd be wed,  
 The Sabbath after she should make the Head,

When we came home—our banns were out, you see,  
 But her auld mother wouldn't ha' her left  
 Neither a wife nor widow like —an' she,  
 Knowing t' auld dame wer' half o' sense bereft  
 Sin' her poor man wer' drowned—made her give  
 Consent—"She'd none so much time left to live."

"None so much time!" we thowt so! I won home  
 Both proud an' happy. Many a full-fed fish  
 Had fallen to my harpoon, an' I'd the sum  
 O' gain an' glory given to my wish.  
 Who met us on the pier as we came back?  
 Why, her auld mother, clad i' rusty black!

My Nancy loved the bonnie primrose flowers.  
 My mate had sought the roots, an' set 'em thick  
 About her grave, hard by the Abbey Towers:  
 An' when I could—I lay a gey bit sick—  
 I climbed the steps, an' knelt them blooms beside,  
 An' when the soft leaves touched me, why, I cried:

Cried like a bairn; they say it saved my wits,  
 It may ha' been so—like a bitter dream,  
 Of wrong, an' loss, an' hope that came by fits,  
 As 'gainst a thunder crash the lightning gleam,  
 Sin' first I looked into her mother's face,  
 All that dark time has left a strange, blurred trace.

She'd caught some fever, doing angels' work,  
 Among the childer, down i' Hagalythe;  
 I like sometimes—set musing i' the mirk—  
 To think my winsome lassie gave her life  
 Helping the helpless. Well, the time flies past,  
 The Northern Star has gone—I'll follow fast.

The best life left to me wer' spent wi' her,  
 'Mid the strange splendours i' them regions seen;  
 The great ice plains wi' neither sound nor stir,  
 The mighty bergs, all blue, an' white, an' green,  
 The plunging sea—the blowing of the whale—  
 The flitting composants on shroud an' sail.

I've fancied when in banners broad unfurled,  
 The crimson lights were glowing over head,  
 As I could a'most see the other world,  
 Where Nance wer' waiting for me, parson said.  
 Aye, many a year she's borne us fast an' far,  
 An' now she's sold for firewood—poor auld Star!

If I'd the brass, I'd buy the brave old boat.  
 An' tak' her out, right out o' sight o' land,  
 An' scuttle her as she lay there afloat,  
 I've strength enow left i' this shaking hand;  
 An' so we'd sink together, her an' me,  
 To slumber to the hushing o' the sea.

But that's another idle dream—I've got  
 Enow to bury me by Nancy's side,  
 Up on the shelf there, i' the chiny pot,  
 She bade her mother gi'e me, ere she died.  
 I'll try to beg a bit on't Star, to make  
 My coffin—for the last old whaler's sake.

## THE GUEST ON MY HEARTH.

By PAUL CHALLINOR.

THE big trunk was locked, the last strap  
 drawn, and the rugs rolled up. Down  
 below we could hear our landlord disturb-  
 ing the morning quiet of the street with  
 shrill whistles and calls of, "Hi, four-  
 wheeler!" and yet Hilda, in her new  
 travelling-wrap, still stood at her easel, her  
 smart hat tipped off her forehead, and a  
 brush in her mouth, working with eager,  
 rapid touch, and masterly certainty of effect,  
 now and then drawing back with half-shut  
 eyes to contemplate the result.

"Hilda, do you want to miss the  
 train?"

"I don't know. Yes; I believe I do,"  
 dreamily, with her head on one side.

"You'll have to go by the next then,  
 that's all."

"Shall I? Yes; I suppose I must. So  
 it's no use trying. There! That must do,  
 then." She woke herself up, threw down  
 her brushes, and jerked her hat back into  
 position. "You will take care of it for me,  
 won't you? Cover it up and let nobody  
 stare at it just yet. I want to look at it  
 again with fresh eyes by-and-by, and see  
 what it really means. I think I've got all  
 the ghostliness back again into it. Nora, I  
 can't bear going; I feel as if something  
 must happen to it, or to you, without me,  
 How I wish you were going with me, or  
 instead of me, or in disguise as me!  
 Wouldn't that do?"

"Certainly not," I pronounced, hooking  
 vigorously at her tenth glove-button;  
 "lords and ladies are not in my line."

"Still less in mine. Well, it's all in the  
 way of business, and I'll let you know how  
 I get on in the gilded halls of the aristo-  
 cracy. Good-bye, Nora, my darling!" and  
 with something very like a tear in her  
 beautiful black eyes, she made a dash at  
 her umbrella and rushed off in the wake of  
 her luggage.

I followed her as far as the landing, and

watched her tripping down the long, uncarpeted flight of stone stairs to the hall beneath. I was guiltily conscious of the relief it was to see her go, and yet cut to the heart with remorse at the thought that it should be so.

She looked up at the turn of the stairs, caught sight of my face, and, moved by some sudden impulse, rushed up again.

"Nora, I can't tell what ails me; but I'm afraid to leave you. Take care of yourself. Don't mope, don't overwork, and don't get into mischief."

She caught me in her strong arms, and pressed one of her rare, warm, almost passionate kisses on my lips, and was off and away again before I could reply.

I turned slowly back to the vast empty studio, which always felt so much bigger and emptier without Hilda Gale in it.

In the long three years of our partnership we had hardly been separated for more than a day hitherto. Never a day by choice since the love-at-first-sight—commoner amongst women than men can admit without a sneer—had mutually seized us and drawn us, two lonely art-students in the wild desert of London, into close companionship. It was curious to stand there and remember the misgivings with which we had taken this studio between us, and begun our penniless, happy-go-lucky life there together, faring sumptuously, now and then, when Hilda's wealthy New York friends happened to remember her and sent her a present or an order; living on crumbs, and counting our halfpence, when pupils were scarce and sales were few.

What a joyous, full, contented life it had been at the hardest, with its cheap pleasures, rare holidays, exciting strokes of luck, and disasters, which always had, at worst, a comic side!

If we had missed some of the leisure and soft living of life, at least we had escaped much of its weariness. We had had work we loved; friends, if few, of our own choosing. It had been a life of sunshine. I broke off with a start. Had been! I was beginning to use the words already. Already I was gazing back on our happy days from a distant standpoint, yearning wistfully for their brightness even in these days of our better fortunes.

Our better fortunes? Well, Hilda had two pictures in the Academy, both well noticed, and one well sold. I had my hands full of work, teaching and illustrating. One of Hilda's pupils, a brilliant,

artistic, enthusiastic little lady, had been pleased to take a violent fancy to her, and had wiled her away on a fortnight's visit. I let her go readily. I did not envy her little Lady Pamela's devotion, nor the valuable introductions she had promised her, and the lucrative employment—work after Hilda's own heart—in the regulating of the neglected art-treasures in Castle Cromer. I longed to be alone with my secret—my golden secret—hugged close to my heart, free to gaze on it and gloat over it untroubled by the keen inquisition of Hilda's loving eyes.

And now I was free, alone, unrestrained by so much as a loving look, just as I had willed it, and my secret lay on my heart like lead, and the glory of our days seemed a faded thing of the past, and it was with something like a sob that I sank down beside the fireless hearth, while, from the walls above, Hilda's great frescoed angels, with the golden sunlight on their wide-spread wings and lifted palms, looked sadly down on me—a world of pitying understanding in their clear, shining eyes. On the easel near the window in full light stood Hilda's picture with the last wet touches on the canvas.

"The Closed Door" was the name she had chosen for it. The two panels, on the second of which she had been working, were to be enclosed in one frame. One was an interior. A rough little cabin lighted only by a dying fire, over which in lonely grief a man sat brooding. One flickering brand cast a light on his rugged face full of a passionate, hopeless yearning. His eyes were fixed on the empty chair in the chimney-corner, and his great rough hands held tenderly a little silken scrap of woman's gear—ribbon, or scarf, or veil. The heavy door behind him was bolted and barred against friendly intrusion; he would be alone with his grief and his memories; but the dog, who had trailed himself to his feet and laid a shaggy head against him in unnoticed sympathy, turned his eyes restlessly towards the threshold.

In the second, outside under a wild, stormy sky, a woman stood, weather-beaten, travel-stained, beating with upraised hand on the shut cabin-door. The face was unnoticeable, except for its look of frantic, hopeless eagerness. One hand clutched at the broken latch as if she would tear the door open, the other was raised to strike. A world of love, and longing, and despair, shone in those great, hollow eyes. It was no false wife or straying daughter returning



repentant and crushed to sue for admittance. It was for her own place as of right that she was clamouring, it was back to her own fireside that she would force her way—and the door was closed. This was not the original motive of the picture. The woman's figure, as Hilda had at first designed it, had been sorrow-crushed, humiliated, exquisitely human. I had been touched by it, and Hilda exasperated.

"Clap-trap!" she had grumbled. "Of course she'll get in if she waits long enough, and makes noise enough. I want that door to remain closed for ever."

She put it impatiently aside for the time. Soon after I chanced to be telling her stories of our old Welsh home and my foster-mother's cabin, where the sod of turf was left alight and the "soul-cake" placed in readiness for the wandering spirits on All Souls' Night. How the door was set carefully ajar, and the watch kept lest by chance the spirit of one who died within the year should be waiting outside for one last chance of communion with the living. She seized on the notion. There was a visionary, imaginative side to her shrewd, practical nature.

"That was what I wanted to paint, though I did not know it. See, Nora, he has himself, in ignorance or forgetfulness, closed the door on her. His heart is full of her. He is holding her little scarf in his hand, clinging to any poor little scrap that shall recall her presence, while she—she herself—stands without, beating with soundless blows on his door, and crying voicelessly on him to hear her. He will not. The hour will strike, and the chance be gone for all eternity."

"An eerie, dreary thing you have made of it. Who do you suppose will buy it now?" I asked, when she had finished.

"Never mind. I am painting it for Her," Hilda said in her odd, enigmatic way.

To-day I shivered as I looked at it, and was glad to put it out of sight. I cleaned brushes and palette, and put away her colours conscientiously, reducing the studio to a forlorn state of dreary tidiness. My solitary meal was ready spread, but I could not look at it, and strolled away restlessly to my bedroom. There were roses lying on my table there—roses that I had not dared to let Hilda see, and near them lay a tiny note. No need to open and read it. I knew its contents by heart, but for the sheer pleasure of looking on the strange handwriting, which in these last few hours

had become so curiously familiar, I pored over it anew.

"My darling, my beautiful proud Nora—mine at last! When you taunted me with the worth of my love, did you guess what even then it was prepared to do and dare for you? You drove me from you with scornful words, my cruel darling. Was it because I had nothing then but my love to offer you? All I have in the world is yours this day—name, wealth, title. I have brought you your price to the uttermost farthing, my queen; deny me now if you dare. I must not come to you—not yet, but I must see you, and at once.—Yours ever, from henceforth.

"LAURENCE."

I put it down, and looked absently at my own reflection in my glass. A worn, anxious-faced girl in a shabby gown, with work-soiled hands and wearied eyes, blushing, trembling; and then, as it were, in a flash of sudden sunshine, glorified and made resplendent in my own eyes by the knowledge of his love. He loved me! In spite of my poverty, my insignificance, my want of knowledge of the world's ways, he loved me! I laughed triumphantly at my shamefaced reflection, and lifted the roses to my lips.

I knew where he would be waiting for me that afternoon. There was a certain small, little-visited picture-gallery to which, in right of an accepted picture of mine, I had entrance free. It would not be our first meeting there, by many. Ours had been a chance acquaintanceship, an accidental meeting followed, by others as accidental—or I had believed so—a friendship founded on slight passing courtesies, of brief conversations that lengthened insensibly before our favourite pictures, now in one gallery, now in another. It was the freemasonry of mutual art-love that had drawn us together, I had decided; till one day some chance word or look had startled me into self-consciousness. I was on my guard from henceforth, against myself as well as him. I would have avoided him, and taken shelter with Hilda, but it was too late. He told me frankly, violently, that he loved me, and when I drew back, upbraided me fiercely with vain coquetry and heartless trifling. He spoke passionately, almost savagely, and I was terrified, and yet secretly exultant. I held my ground. If I had forced him to reveal his secret, I could keep my own—or what were a woman's wits worth?

So I sent him from me with stinging words to be repented with bitter tears in secret after. He never came again, only now and then came a flower, a book, a drawing, once or twice a costly jewel which I had hidden angrily away; and ever and always I felt that an unseen watch was kept on me, that my steps were followed; while over and over again came brief, passionate messages imploring me "to wait—only wait!"

For what, I wondered? Now I should know.

I trifled restlessly through the hours till the time I had decided on, undisturbed except by my good old landlady toiling up to see me in my solitude, and to mourn over my untasted meal, and make comforting suggestions about early tea. I got rid of her, pleading engagements, and watched her safely away before, with hands that trembled guiltily, do what I would, I dressed to go out.

I put on my everyday walking-dress, pinning the roses in my little rough black coat as its one touch of prettiness. I looked at my reflection, only half satisfied when all was done—yet why need I care? He loved me—he loved me! and some day I would make myself fair and fine for his sake.

I had to drive—how Hilda would have scolded—but I could not meet him splashed with street-mud. Good old Hilda! She had insisted on leaving me with pockets well-lined, and what a traitor I felt when I thought of her!

The shabby old custodian of the gallery looked, I fancied, askance at me when I entered. The rooms looked empty, and silent, and stuffy as usual. Only a couple from the country were working their conscientious way round, beginning at Number One with a catalogue between them, and speaking to one another in whispers. I passed on to an inner room. Someone sprung up from the seat in the centre. He was beside me in a stride, his arm round me, and my two hands crushed in the clasp of his hand.

"At last, at last! My darling!"

I freed myself decisively, leaving one hand in his and looked up into his face. How worn it was—how changed since I had last seen him! A strong, beautiful face, with dark, burning eyes, and lips that trembled.

"Why do you put me away? Have you wearied of waiting?" he asked, with fierce impatience, under his breath. "Is that what you have come to tell me—eh?"

His breath caught, and a shudder ran through him from head to foot, while his face grew ghastly white. "Speak!" he said hoarsely. "Why do you meet me so?"

I had set my lips sternly, and after one look had turned away my eyes lest he should read too much in them—lest he should guess the mighty joy that had seized me at the touch of his hand, the sound of his voice in my ears once more. Then I ventured to look at him again, and gently lifting my hand touched the roses at my breast.

"Nora, Nora! My love—my queen—my wife!" he cried with a sort of sob, and dropped his burning lips on the fingers he held. "You dare not have come to me thus—with a smile on your lips, and my flowers at your breast, if you had played me false!" Then he caught me in his arms, and held me with sudden stress to his heart for a moment.

When he had frightened me before by his vehemence I could take refuge in icy coldness and cutting words. I was past that now; I was weakened by the sudden delight of meeting, by the long-endured pain of separation, by secret, unshared inward conflict. I rested my head against his arm in a dumb, blissful ecstasy.

"Not a word, Nora? Are you too angry with me to speak?" he asked, but his voice was full of content. "Tell me you have chafed at my long absence—that you hated me for my silence. Ah, my darling, that it was that maddened me—the thought of what you might be suffering too."

I lifted my eyes to his face and tried to smile, but I met his dark glance full of such fire that I dropped and shivered beneath it.

We were alone. The country couple had departed; I had heard the turnstile at the entrance clash behind them. Laurence drew me to a seat beside him, and held me close to him while he whispered in my ear words I had dreamed of. I longed to hear him speak, and yet some strange, new shyness kept me from all response.

"Let me have time to think," I forced myself to say at last. "I cannot realise what you want yet. Nor do you, perhaps. You are a rich man, are you not? And I—"

"Rich? Too poor to buy a smile from you, Nora, once upon a time!" impatiently.

"And you said 'your title'. I did not know—" I faltered.

"No. By Heaven, I believe you, Nora!" he cried with sudden conviction. "You

were not bargaining for that, at least. It would have been little use," he muttered in a savage undertone. "Such as it is, it is yours. 'Lady Inglefield'"—he stopped to raise my hands to his lips, and his eyes glowed with dark fire again—"your days of toil are ended, my beautiful love. All that the heart of woman can wish for shall be yours. Ask me for something, Nora. Give me some wild, impossible fantasy to gratify. What do you women most long for? Where is the ring I sent you? Were the diamonds not big enough? You shall choose for yourself. Or do you not care for trinkets such as any woman might wear. You want power, position—to be a leader of the great world, perhaps. One worshipper of your beauty would not content you."

"Oh, hush, Laurence!" I besought. "What are you dreaming of? What do I know of the great world? I am an ignorant, inexperienced girl. How should I have any extravagant fancies to gratify, unless it is one that you should love me for ever, as you say you do now? No more diamonds. There is not one in the world big enough and bright enough to tempt me to wear it now. Give me what you will when I am your wife."

"Kiss me, Nora!" he demanded, almost roughly, "and say when that shall be."

"Not a kiss, not a diamond till then, and it shall be when you will."

The turnstile clattered round again, admitting a party of four or five, who scattered themselves all over the place. We started apart.

"Good-bye, Laurence," I whispered, rising.

He held my dress to detain me.

"I must not follow you now, Nora. I am wanted elsewhere. They must have missed me already, and wondered," he stopped to laugh mockingly; "and to-morrow—I cannot see you to-morrow, I think, but the next day I will come."

I would have protested, but his words were imperative.

"Yes, I will come to you. I will come for my wife. Put on your wedding-dress, Nora, and call your friends together if you will, for before that day is over you shall be mine. Nothing in earth or heaven stands between us now."

He laughed a hard, defiant laugh. His face, as if turned to confront some unseen adversary, grew hard, defiant, his eyes alight with a sort of cruel triumph. His hands clutched mine, crushing it painfully.

Then, with a sudden softening, his eyes met mine, and so we parted.

I sat with pen in hand and paper before me for many an hour that night trying to tell Hilda what had befallen. I could not. The same constraint seemed laid upon me which had sealed my lips before, whenever my secret would have passed them.

Once I had sketched his face from memory and laid it before her as if it had been a study for one of my illustrations.

"A handsome face," she had said musingly. "A fierce, remorseless face. Is he your villain? He looks a bold one," and so she had silenced me.

Now I tried once more. It was a hard task. First of all to tell how little I knew—how I had only known his name within the last few months; and of his home and his friends I yet knew nothing. Had there been time I would have begged her to come back to me. I wondered now how I could ever have let her go. A great craving for the support of her strong, loving presence swept over me, and a great dread of my own weakness and lonesomeness. Laurence would come to take me away, and how should I refuse to go with him? I could not, even if I had so willed. What more could I wish than to be his wife? And yet I trembled in my loneliness at the thought of the terrible new world opening before me.

No! I could not write to Hilda yet.

The next day dawned full of autumn storm. A basket of costly flowers lay on my breakfast-table, but no message. I thought it strange at first, until it struck me that it meant that I should see him that day after all, most likely.

My courage had come back with the daylight. I was glad to look forward to meeting him. As to our marriage, why should I fear his forcing that on with undue haste? He would wait for Hilda; he could not refuse me that. Now and then a thought of his fierce passionate eyes and hot vehemence made me thrill with a faint misgiving, but I sang about the great bare studio as I made it look its prettiest in his honour. I displayed our few treasures of Oriental stuffs and quaint-hued art-tinted embroideries to their best advantage, re-arranged our few precious morsels of bric-à-brac, kindled a mighty blaze in the old tiled fireplace with the high carved mantel-shelf. Then I made the place festal with my flowers, and took out my gayest dress—Hilda's choice, not mine—and clasped her gift, a silver bracelet, on my wrist.

I opened the cases and looked at the jewels he had sent me, but left them untouched. The great flashing diamonds might suit his wife, but not a working-woman like me, I decided. Then I brought out Hilda's picture and set it on her easel. It struck me with new force, and I stood looking at it till I turned away shivering. A little calendar was pinned on the wall near me, and when I noticed the date I shivered again, and impatiently covered the painting up and put it away.

The short day closed in, and I lighted my shaded lamp, and still worked on and on. Now and then I sprang up, and took a rapid turn up and down the room to rest hands and eyes. The demon of unquiet possessed me. I flung the heavy shutter back, and looked out into the night. The autumn rain fell heavily, sprayed to right and left against the window-panes by each fierce gust that swept down the empty street. From parapet and cornice the water poured in showers, and by the misty gleam of the street-lamp I could see the channel beside the pavement running like a river. I suddenly realised the lateness of the hour. All the lights were out in the house opposite—ours was a quiet street—except the fanlight over the doctor's door, and a dim gleam in the windows of the chapel. What was the service to be at this time of night, and who would go to it? I idly wondered. The only human being abroad seemed to be the policeman. I dimly made out his shiny figure tramping heavily past in his mackintosh cape.

I heard the studio-door open gently, and remained concealed in my dusky corner. Only my landlady, good, motherly soul, coming in to ask if there was anything she could do for me.

I saw her shake her head as she looked at my untouched supper—the little cake she had made for me, and the glass of milk, standing as she had left them two hours ago on the low table by the hearth. She made a few doubtful steps in the direction of my bedroom, but evidently thought better of it before she reached the door, and turned back again. Then she carefully drew the scattered embers of my fire together into a last blaze, and withdrew with a shade of disappointment on her kindly, wrinkled old face.

I was vexed and ashamed. I had been a coward, and had kept out of sight, dreading her questions, when, perhaps, after all, it might have been only some of her own daily worries she had come to

talk over with me. Perhaps her old husband was ailing again, and she wanted my help. I hurried after her remorsefully. She had disappeared when I reached the landing, most probably into her daughter's room, for I could hear voices on the floor above me.

The long white stone staircase, lighted only by one dim swinging-lamp, looked terribly dreary and ghostly, and a cold blast sweeping up now and again suggested untimely coming and going in the lower regions. I returned shivering, but left my door ajar. Even so much of human companionship felt comforting after my long, lonely day. I could not think of sleep for hours to come. I should only lie awake counting the minutes as they passed, each one bringing me nearer to the fateful to-morrow. I turned my lamp high, and sat down before my drawing-board again.

I succeeded in getting absorbed in some delicate line-work, and in forgetting for a space to count the ticking of the clock. But my eyes would stand no more. The sketch grew indistinct, and the lines blurred, and I stopped to press my hands hard over my forehead to relieve the dull ache there.

Sitting thus with my eyes covered, I grew conscious, I know not how, of a second presence in the room. There was no sound there other than the rustling of the dying embers on the hearth and the angry swirl of wind and rain against the window. Then in the brief stillness I could hear in far-off, muffled tones the tolling of a bell. That was all.

A chill breath of air struck on me, and I shivered from head to foot. I dropped my hands from before my face and peered into the gloom. Surely my tired sight was playing me some fantastic trick, or what was it—that shadow that passed between me and the far dimly-lighted wall? From out the dusky corner, where a tall screen masked the entrance to the room, it stole—softly gliding—with no sound of foot-fall or sweep of rustling garments—a dark, formless Shape advancing towards me.

I pushed my chair back noisily and sprang to my feet. I would not be afraid. Why should I? Who or what would come to harm me? There was help at hand. I had but to cry out. Then a cold dew burst forth on my forehead, and my lips refused to open and give sound to my call, and with trembling hands I clutched my table to steady myself as a deathlike faintness seized me, while nearer and nearer



drew the dark, mysterious thing. It had gained the Venetian mirror now, and crept across its field like a black mist. It passed me close, and again the cold blast of air, charged with an odour of decay as from a fresh-opened vault, blew on me. Then it stood motionless and spectral, a black shadow on my hearthstone.

I made a violent effort to regain the mastery over myself. I drew myself sharply erect and challenged the intruder, advancing to it as I did so. As I approached it it seemed to grow slowly distinct, and to take solid form. A white face, lighted by great, shining eyes, peered out at me from under the hood of a long black mantle. A slim white hand was stretched forth from its folds and raised as if to prohibit a nearer approach. She—for it was a woman's face—bowed her head courteously to me, but kept silence. Then without invitation the hand was extended, and she broke from off the edge of the cake on the table a small fragment which she ate, still keeping her eyes fixed on me. Then she raised the glass to her lips.

"Who are you?" I repeated the demand.

"A friend," she answered. Her voice was sweet, but hollow-sounding, and faint as if heard from afar. "You do not trust me, and you give me no welcome. Yet I have come on no bad errand. You need not fear me. I come from those who love you best."

I drew near her, reassured. Outside the storm rose anew, and beat with frantic sobs and shrieks at the window. There was no raindrop on her mantle, though; no wet footprint on the floor. How had she come through such a night? I had heard no sound of wheels nor of horses' feet without. Only in the next pause of the gale came snatches of organ-music and chanting voices from the chapel across to me.

She let the dark cloak drop from her head and shoulders, and I made out that she was not, as I at first had fancied, an old woman, but a woman aged and worn by pain and sorrow. She was slightly deformed, and walked lame; her wax-white forehead was wrinkled, and her mouth drawn. Her great mournful eyes sought mine pleadingly, till my heart ached for pity.

"It is late," I faltered.

"It is my only hour," she answered, "and the time is short for the work there is to be done. Why do you look at me so? What do you see in my face?"

It was the face of a woman from whose life all joy had died, all spirit been crushed by long, sore suffering, but who yet had lived to know some bitterest pang of all—to whom some cruellest wrong had dealt the death-stroke.

"Can you paint my picture? It is for a farewell gift."

"Not at such a time as this," I expostulated. "I want daylight. I am not prepared."

She pointed to my sketch-block and pencil.

"The merest outline will do; only make haste."

I hesitated, but felt I must needs obey, unreasonable as it seemed. I took a fresh sheet of paper, arranged the light, and posed my sitter. She drew her dusky mantle round her with one white hand, and from its heavy folds the noble outline of brow and cheek stood out clear and well-defined. Her eyes fixed on me seemed to hold me in thrall. My fingers worked mechanically with marvellous speed and skill, guided by some power external to me. I felt as one possessed. The gift of a divine insight had for that brief space descended on me for certain. The sickly, grief-furrowed features before me showed as the mere earthly mask through which it was given unto me to see the veritable countenance—the deeper beauty that lay concealed under the marring touches of carking care and pain—to see the very soul looking from her eyes, speaking through her lips.

She stopped me at last and rose.

"Is this all you want of me?" I asked.

"No. Keep that till he who has the best right to it shall come."

I looked at her questioningly, though I felt I knew the name that was on her lips.

"Give it to him—to Laurence, your lover. To Laurence, Lord Inglefield."

Then fell silence—the silence of death between us. Then, like a blow, there struck the first stroke of midnight.

"Tell him it comes from me—from Joan, his wife."

I stood shaking like a leaf. The bell tolled again.

"Tell him I came to save you, if you would be saved by me. I grudge you not my place, poor child, only my evil fortune."

The clock tolled on.

"Had you but loved him," she cried with a sudden passion of regret—"loved him with a love strong and noble enough to have worked out his salvation as well

as your own, I would have been content to pass into the silence and forgetfulness of the grave without a sign. But you do not. What is your love to mine? A little flame of vanity and romance to end in ashes."

I made no protest. She spoke truth. It seemed already dying in my breast, leaving my heart cold.

"Turn from him, then! Be deaf to his words, blind to his lures! And pray, child!—pray, as you never prayed before, that your good angel may stand beside you in your hour of meeting."

Still, in the silence, the bell tolled on.

"I leave you this for token," and her hand was extended to mine, "that you have seen and spoken with me. Ask him, if he denies it, to dare to look again on my poor face. Ask him how I lived—ask him how I died."

The last stroke of midnight. Her voice grew suddenly faint, like a far-off echo. I fell on my knees, my hands clasped over my face. From without there floated in to me the solemn music of a requiem mass, and to my lips there rose the prayer for the dead—for the wandering souls abroad in the blast on that All Souls' Night.

They passed before me, dimly seen through falling tears—the faces of those long dead ones I loved so well. Mother, my scarce-remembered father, my fair young sister with the face of one of Hilda's angels.

I watched through the night till the grey morning broke, then throwing my gay dress aside, I clothed myself in a mourning garb—deepest black, for it was for a living love now dead and cold that I mourned—dead and cold as the grey ashes that strewed my hearth. Laurence's flowers hung faded in their vases in a streak of bright cold sunshine, that poured in as if to mock my desolation. The old mirror showed me myself cold and lifeless as the grey ashes, drooping as the neglected roses, sitting with idle hands waiting for my lover with the ring on my finger that his wife had placed there.

I heard his step on the stair, his step full of eager, happy haste; the door was burst open, and he stood before me, bold, handsome, masterful, his arms extended.

"Nora! my love—my wife!"

"Never, Laurence! Never your wife. Take this answer and leave me."

His eyes flamed.

"Why, is this some pretty trick of coyness? Or do you still mistrust me? What stands between us yet?"

Then I stretched forth my hand and plucked down the black curtain that hung before my picture. I can see his face now. It blanched to a ghastly whiteness, then grew hot with fierce resolve.

"My wife! How did you come by it?" There was hatred in his tone and a touch of wonder. "Are you jealous of a dead woman, Nora? She can keep us apart no longer;" and I heard a muttered curse on his lips. "When did you see her?"

"She was with me last night, standing where you stand. Can you guess her errand? See, here is her token that I have seen and spoken with her."

I drew the ring from my finger and held it to him. He took it curiously, and then dropped it, as if it had scorched him.

"That ring!" and his voice for the first time trembled.

"And she bade me ask you, Laurence, to look on her there, and to tell me how did she live and how did she die."

Then he covered under my fixed look, his face blanching in mortal terror.

"She told you that—last night? Why, I saw her buried yesterday. And that ring—that ring! I placed it on her finger in her coffin;" the words drifting from his lips as if frozen with horror.

"Farewell!" sighed a voice that seemed not mine, though it spoke through my lips. His eyes only replied, full of overmastering dread, baulked passion, and blank despair. No word, nor touch, nor caress, was possible between us, now or for evermore; for between us stands the Shadow of the Dead.

And yet I live. Live to find, if I may, my place in this great, empty world, to be Hilda's true and faithful comrade till I give her into the loving hands that are even now outstretched to claim her from me—live to fast and pray for the Living and Dead.

## A MIND OF HER OWN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WATER OF REVELATION," ETC.

### CHAPTER I.

"NORA, you don't mean it—you can't possibly mean it!" exclaimed Mrs. Penfeather.

"But I do," replied her cousin, Nora Clyne, with the utmost calm.

"It is absurd! You, who have two thousand a year, and who came to me—at least I thought so—with the intention of

making a good marriage, want to go into a draper's shop to be a common shop-girl!"

"Well, why not? The only requirements for such a position, besides honesty and a knowledge of compound addition, are, I believe, a fairly good figure, and no objection to wearing black gowns. I think my figure will pass," said Miss Clyne, surveying her graceful form critically in a long mirror, "and black is becoming to me. I ought to get a situation, in spite of my want of experience."

"It isn't that!" cried the matron. "You know very well what I mean. You oughtn't to want a situation, and the way you are talking is simply mad. You are just twenty-one, and you are an heiress. Thanks to your guardian's idiotic prejudices, you have never been in London before. You are undeniably good-looking; yet, instead of caring, as a sensible girl should, about balls and theatres, and securing a good establishment, your first wish is to shut yourself up in a stuffy, horrid shop, where you'll have to stand for hours, till your feet ache and your brain reels, and yet be expected to be active and smiling. You are unquestionably insane!"

"I hope not, Lou; I think not," replied Nora with a smile of rather conscious superiority. "You have enumerated the very reasons why I want to make this experiment. I have read in the newspapers articles telling how shop-girls are over-worked and ill-treated, and I think my two thousand a year, and, perhaps, the good looks you say I possess, should help me in a crusade I mean to preach against their wrongs. But I don't want to have men say to me, as they usually do to every woman who is in earnest about any question, 'You don't know anything about the matter!' I want to know my subject—to have data in my own experience."

"And"—Mrs. Penfeather spoke with anxious solemnity—"do you mean to pass all your life in one of these places?"

Miss Clyne's smile became a little mischievous.

"Oh no," she said. "After six months' experience of millinery, I shall probably become a barmaid, and then, perhaps, a ballet-girl."

Mrs. Penfeather fairly screamed.

"I won't do it, Nora—I will not do it. I cannot let you degrade yourself in those horrid ways. What would Sir George think of me?"

"I cannot guess, though I know what he thinks of you already."

"What is it? Do tell me!" cried the matron, expecting something complimentary.

"He says that you are 'a confounded matchmaker'—that's his very phrase—'who has a score of needy fortune-hunters round her, ready to pounce on an ignorant girl with a little money'—that's me."

"Your guardian is a—brute!" exclaimed Mrs. Lou, with tears of anger in her eyes.

"He is a donkey, at least," returned Nora calmly. "He would be furious if he knew my plans. His wish was that I should remain in his house, till I consented to marry 'a gentleman of suitable rank and wealth,' he said—in short, someone of his choosing. It was my announcing my determination, as soon as I attained my majority, to pay that visit to you to which he had always refused his consent, that made him characterise you in the terms I repeated. You see, he is jealous of the influence you have over me."

Mrs. Penfeather had not a shadow of influence over her cousin, who, indeed, prided herself on her independent ways; but the suggestion flattered Lou, and in the reaction from her recent indignation she began to judge Nora's scheme more leniently.

"But, my dear," she said, returning to the original subject of conversation, "you don't really want to be a ballet-girl, do you?"

"No; I was only jesting when I threatened that. I want to make this one experiment of a month in a draper's shop. Nobody but you and Mr. Penfeather knows that I am in London, and he won't mention the fact to anyone—I don't interest him sufficiently. So, if you'll only be a good, kind, obliging cousin, you will get me a situation with that Blacklock to whom you are such a good customer; and a month hence you can announce, to the half-dozen future husbands you have selected for me, the arrival of your charming cousin from Yorkshire. If you won't do what I want, I will return to Swarfedale to-morrow; but, if you will, I promise to remain with you six months, if you don't tire of me before, and to marry the whole six if nothing less will satisfy you."

Mrs. Penfeather protested a little longer, but more feebly. When one is thirty-five, and is growing stout, and has a husband who hates going out and doesn't like parties at home, invitations become less plentiful than they were ten years before;

and it is a marvellous fillip to a matron's popularity, and an addition to her prestige, to have a young and handsome heiress to take about with her. Mrs. Penfeather's temporal happiness being measured almost wholly by the number of evenings she could spend in other people's drawing-rooms, she really longed for that increased number of requests for the pleasure of her society which Nora Clyne's residence with her would produce. Therefore she gave her adhesion to the girl's scheme for disposing of the first month of her stay in London, on the express stipulation that for a year thereafter Nora should make the Penfeather establishment her home.

Nora promised, and Mrs. Penfeather went to ask Mr. Blacklock to take into his establishment one Miss Adams, whom she stated to be a humble protégée of hers, and a very intelligent and respectable girl.

"I have perjured myself terribly on your account," she said to her cousin on her return from the interview. "I said you were intelligent and respectable."

Nora smiled.

"And don't you think I am?" she asked.

"Oh, of course; but you know when one describes a woman in those terms, one always means that she isn't quite a lady."

"That's rather hard on the ladies, is it not?" said Miss Clyne demurely.

But her cousin failed to perceive the sarcasm.

"Blacklock will take you on trial for a month," Lou went on, "and he means to put you 'in small wares', he says; but if you are smart and obliging you are to be promoted to lace. I hope you like the prospect. If I hadn't promised faithfully to see you through this experiment without protest, I should have fled from the place at the first mention of small wares. Small wares indeed!"

"I wonder what they are," said Nora thoughtfully. Then she waxed eloquent. "I, too, shall share in the dignity of labour!" she exclaimed. "And afterwards, when I want to right any wrong of the working-woman's, I shall say—not 'I am told'—but 'I know, I have seen, I have endured!'"

"I hope to goodness you won't!" cried Lou. "I wouldn't have your mad freak known for worlds. You pride yourself, I believe, on having a mind of your own, but you would be much better without it. A woman should have no mind but her husband's."

"But if she hasn't a husband what is she to do?"

"Get one," said Mrs. Penfeather sententiously.

Two days afterwards Nora Clyne entered the service of Mr. Blacklock. He was one of those tradesmen of distinctly modern growth who believe very devoutly in the division of labour, and not at all in the division of profit, and, therefore, he had extended his original drapery business to include coals, coffins, and groceries. He had one hero, one ideal—the Universal Provider of Westbourne Grove. He had stretched a point in taking Nora to oblige Mrs. Penfeather, who was such a good customer that her husband sometimes averred (when filling up a cheque in payment of a quarter's bills) that he believed she received back a large percentage on her purchases. It was with some regret that this autocrat of drapery had regarded his complaisance, till Miss Clyne appeared, clothed in a severely plain black gown. Then a glance of critical admiration rose to his eye.

"A fine figure," he murmured. "When she has a little experience I'll put her into the mantles."

It was by way of experiencing in her own person the glorious privilege of earning her own bread, that Nora had entered Mr. Blacklock's shop, but before the first twelve hours of self-dependence had elapsed, her idea of the nobility of labour had dwindled greatly. There was nothing noble in the sale of needles and buttons, nothing to elevate the soul in tape and sewing-cotton. Then, though she considered herself a fair arithmetician, it tested her capacity severely to find out how much the half of sevenpence three-farthings was—almost as much, indeed, as it confused her honesty to learn that it was fourpence.

That she should not get through the first day of her experiment without blunders was to be expected; the marvel was that none of them were serious. Once, indeed, she brought down on herself a rebuke from one of the shop-walkers. In the prosecution of her quest for the grievances of the shop-girl, Nora began to question one of her companions about the circumstances of her life. There was no purchaser demanding her attention at the moment, and she did not know that she was guilty of an infringement of any rule till the voice of one of the shop-walkers fell on her ears.



"Not so much talking, young ladies; it won't do."

Nora turned round abruptly, and flashed at the giver of the reproof a glance of indignant scorn, which he met with a look at once firm and deferential. Fortunately Miss Clyne remembered her assumed position in time to restrain the sharp word that rose to her lips.

"I am sorry to have transgressed any rule," she said coldly but politely, as she turned away.

Her companion in the fault put in a word.

"Don't be too hard on us, Mr. Wilson," she said, with smirking deprecation; "we weren't saying any ill of you, you may be sure."

Mr. Wilson turned his back on her with scarcely-concealed irritation, and looked at Nora with bewildered interest, as he returned to his usual post a few yards off.

"She isn't like the rest," he reflected; "she's not very tall, and she's not very stout; but somehow there seems to be more of her. And she doesn't speak like the others; her tone is different, and she doesn't scramble over her words. I suppose she doesn't belong to London."

He kept his eye on her all day, not to watch lest she should repeat her fault, but to observe as something phenomenal the quiet grace of her movements, the self-respecting courtesy she showed to customers, the perfect dignity she seemed to put into the meanest action. He was not accustomed to see those qualities in Mr. Blacklock's establishment. There were plenty of pretty girls there—prettier than Nora, perhaps—but she was different from them.

"If I were setting up for myself, I should want to have someone like her to manage the dressmaking department," he thought. "Wouldn't she fetch ladies! She looks like one of themselves."

"That's Mr. Wilson," Nora's fellow-offender, Miss Jones, managed to whisper to her; "he's not a bad young gentleman. He may find fault with us, but he won't report us to him." (Mr. Blacklock was always represented in the vocabulary of his employes by this simple pronoun.) "We should be fined if he did."

"We are forbidden to talk," Nora replied coldly, and was not to be persuaded into further conversation.

Nevertheless she could not help observing Wilson. He was rather undersized, she thought, comparing him with the other

men she had met—fox-hunting, amateur-farming squires, and their soldier sons and younger brothers, who had sometimes appeared at Sir George Radford's—men as unlike this London shopman as they well could be.

This was all she noticed the first day she was at Mr. Blacklock's. On the next, she perceived that, though Mr. Wilson's head was rather too big for his body, his eyes were "nice", large, and brown, and bright. Afterwards she observed that his behaviour to the lady-customers who at certain hours thronged the shop, was marked by more real deference combined with less obsequiousness than that of the other shop-walkers, and that he was always and impartially ready to help any of the girls to take out a heavy drawer or lift a box. In her mental notes of life in a draper's establishment she set down that, while the female attendants were mostly "horrid", some of the men were "rather nice".

She clung to her determination to remain in her present position for a month, though it seemed to her that she had investigated all its possibilities in three days.

"I am sure I know all about it," she said to herself, "and it is rather a waste of time to remain for three more weeks; but, if I left now, Lou would think I had given in and would laugh at me." For though Miss Clyne professed to have a mind of her own, it was not strong enough to bear ridicule with equanimity.

She went to see Mrs. Penfeather on the first Sunday of her servitude, going in a hasty and surreptitious manner, as if she feared that someone would detect her double position.

"It is rather monotonous work," she said to her cousin, when that lady questioned her about her situation; "not very interesting and not very elevating; but by no means bad. The girls ought to have seats, certainly, that they may rest when they are not actually serving; and I shall agitate for that after I leave; but, otherwise, I don't think they have much to complain of."

"But you don't like it?" asked Lou.

"N—no; but then it is more dull for me than for the others. They seem to have a lot of subjects to giggle over in common, and then in the evening they walk out with the young men. I don't, you see; so I feel lonely."

Lou burst into sudden laughter.

"Oh, Nora," she exclaimed, "what a joke it would be if some of the 'young men' took

to paying you attention ! It would serve you right for trying to leave your proper station, and you would find out then what a much prouder woman you are than you think."

"I hope I should be able to keep them at a proper distance," replied Miss Clyne with a severity that would have done credit to the principal of a lady's seminary ; but, as she spoke, she blushed, remembering that on the previous day Wilson had offered her a spray of narcissus-blossoms, and that she had accepted it, and thanked him graciously for it.

"I mustn't do that again," she thought.

Yet on Monday, when he came up and silently laid some lily-of-the-valley against her hand which was lying on the counter, she did not refuse them.

"It would look so unkind," she said to herself ; "and after all, what does it matter ? Three weeks hence I shall disappear from this place, and vanish from his life for ever. Poor fellow ! He really looks too much of a gentleman for this sort of thing."

#### CHAPTER II.

AFTER her cousin had gone, Mrs. Penfeather fell a-thinking. This mental exercise was with her so rare as to be phenomenal, and, as is frequently the case with phenomena, its results were more often surprising than beneficial.

"Poor Nora !" she said to herself now. "It must really be much worse than she will admit, and she has three more weeks of it. She won't give in, I know, but I really think I ought to do something to make it easier for her. If I told Blacklock who she really is, and that her going into his service was only a caprice, no doubt he would make things as pleasant for her as possible."

In thus imagining, Mrs. Penfeather, as the result proved, showed an entire lack of comprehension of the nature of the British tradesman. This is two-sided ; on the one (that which customers see), obsequious to servility ; on the other (known only to employes), autocratic to despotism. Mr. Blacklock was the bond-slave of ladies while they kept on their own side of the counter ; when they intruded on the other he was their tyrant. This rule admitted of no exception, unless, indeed, such exceptional displeasure as filled his breast on learning from Mrs. Penfeather the true name and station of "Miss Adams", and the exceptional severity with which he felt she

deserved to be treated. She was a spy, a traitor in the camp, and merited a traitor's doom. Unfortunately, the law does not confer on the employer of labour the right to hang, draw, and quarter offending subjects, and it took Mr. Blacklock two days, to evolve a suitable means of punishing Miss Clyne's impertinence in entering his domain under false pretences.

Then, like the hackneyed "wolf on the fold", he bore down on the small ware counter.

"What are you doing there ?" he asked in the most discordant tones of a not naturally harmonious voice. "You're idling your time, as usual, Miss Adams. Do you think I haven't had my eye on you and seen how lazy you are ? Take that flower out of your gown. Ladies don't like to see falderals of that sort on the young women in the shops they patronise."

Mr. Blacklock expected Nora to claim indignantly to be styled a young lady. Any other of his female vassals would have done so, but Miss Adams was not so sensitive on the subject as they ; and, indeed, being rather bewildered at this sudden and undeserved outburst of severity, did not know that any insult to her was meant. She meekly—in appearance, at least, for her spirit was roused by the injustice of Blacklock's anger—removed from her neck the flower which Wilson now daily brought her, and laid it on the counter, but her eyes flashed a little when her master threw it on the ground and trampled it underfoot.

"Don't stand staring at me in that idiotic fashion," the irate master of the shop went on. "I know that drawer of tape is untidy ; take it out and sort the contents."

Putting considerable restraint upon her temper, which was naturally high, Nora turned to obey. The drawer in question was a rather heavy one, and stood on a shelf somewhat above her head. Perhaps she was somewhat shaken by the effort to control her anger, and was less careful than usual ; at any rate, the drawer slipped from her hands and fell, its contents scattered on the floor.

"More of your infernal clumsiness or malice !" cried Blacklock. "I believe you did it on purpose !"

Wilson, who had been watching the scene with anxious discomposure, was hastening forward, to help Nora to pick up the scattered tapes, when his master stopped him.

"Let her do it herself," he said ; "she'd like well enough to have a young man

helping her and making himself agreeable. They're all up to those tricks, laying traps for flirtation."

This speech was the last straw to Nora's already overburdened temper.

"Anyone can pick up the things who chooses!" she exclaimed; "I won't—and I won't stay in this place an hour longer!"

She was about to walk away, when Mr. Blacklock put his hand on her shoulder.

"No, you don't go yet," he said; "I haven't dismissed you."

She shook off his touch.

"Then I dismiss myself," she returned.

"Then I shall sue you for breach of contract," replied Blacklock.

"I don't care; I won't serve you a minute more."

"Well, you know what'll come of it."

Hence longer opposed her passage, and she walked through the shop under the curious eyes of all the saleswomen, till she reached that part of the establishment where Mr. Blacklock lodged his assistants. Arrived at her bedroom she locked the door and sat down to have a good cry, as a preliminary to packing up the few possessions she had brought with her to the draper's.

"What shall I do?" she moaned in as real distress as if the loss of her situation had been a serious pecuniary matter to her. "I can't go back to Lou and confess what a failure I've been; and besides, I must see what that man means to do. I mustn't disgrace my poor cousin by being carried to prison from her house."

Finally she remembered having noticed a quiet-looking hotel in one of the side-streets near the Blacklock establishment, and there she took a room. She sent a messenger to Mr. Blacklock with her address, for her spirit refused to let her seem to have fled from the consequences of her action. Unfortunately her ex-employer took the message as an act of defiance—a challenge to him to carry out his threat.

"I'll do it," he said to himself. "I'll teach her what she and her like may expect when they come prying into things that don't concern them."

The result of this decision was that next day Nora received a summons addressed to her as Leonora Adams, and on the following appeared in the district court to answer to the charge of breach of contract with her employer.

The bench, after having heard a statement of the case, in which Nora, indeed, appeared as a miracle of insubordination,

gave a verdict for Blacklock, and fixed the damages at ten shillings.

"I won't pay it," said Miss Clyne; "not a penny!"

"Do you ask for exemption on the ground of poverty?" asked the magistrate.

"No; I could pay it easily enough if I chose, but I don't choose."

"Then I must commit you to prison for contempt of court."

"You can do what you like," replied Nora, tearful, but obstinate; "but nothing shall induce me to give that wretch money for behaving like a brute to me."

For this speech she was warned that such expressions were libellous, and that any repetition of them would involve her in yet deeper trouble. And so, indignant and unhappy, she was led away to prison.

A version, vague and inaccurate, of these proceedings reached Mr. Blacklock's establishment; but the general impression was that Miss Adams had had no money to pay the fine imposed, and ran some risk of being imprisoned for life if she could not raise the sum demanded, and sympathy, not loud, but deep, was expressed for her.

"Not but what she brought it on herself," said Miss Jones. "She was a fool to fight against him; but she was very independent and stand-offish in her ways."

Most distressed of all was Wilson. He could not wholly defend Nora's behaviour in the matter. Blacklock had been trying, but then masters so often were so that it was not worth getting angry about. But, as may already have been surmised, he was in love with her, and the thought of her being in prison was terrible to him.

"I can't bear it. I must pay that money for her, and—and— oh, if she would only marry me!"

Next day, as Nora, who had scarcely slept on her hard and narrow prison-bed, was speculating whether it would not, after all, be wiser to give in, pay the damages, and be restored to freedom, the door of her cell opened, and Wilson entered, looking apologetic and uncomfortable.

"Sir," said Nora with as much dignity as her red eyes permitted, "if you come from Mr. Blacklock——"

"I don't," he hastened to assure her. "It's this, Miss Adams. Of course you may think I was taking a liberty, but I couldn't bear to think of you being shut up here for goodness knows how long, so I—I ventured to pay that ten shillings."

A great wave of relief rushed over

Nora's soul. She was free once more, yet had not been obliged to undergo the humiliation of "giving in". What could a woman want more? But she dissembled.

"I have no doubt you meant kindly, Mr. Wilson; but really I have no claim on you, and of course you know that I refused to pay the money on principle, so——"

She paused, not really having a logical deduction to make from these facts.

"Of course that makes a difference," replied Wilson, looking more nervous than before; "I imagined that, perhaps, just at the time you didn't find it quite convenient to pay it."

Nora was sincerely touched at this hesitating speech.

"That was kind," she said with an accent of unmistakable truthfulness, "to spend your hardly-earned money for the benefit of a girl, of whom you knew nothing but that she was foolish and in-subordinate. I thank you with all my heart, and I gratefully accept your generosity."

"Don't thank me; it was a pleasure to do it; and as to not knowing anything about you—well, of course I haven't known you very long, but it has been long enough to—make me love you, in fact. You can't go back to Blacklock's, you know, and you may not find it quite easy to get another situation at present; I know I'm not worthy of you, but I'm really awfully fond of you, and would give you your own way in everything; so if you would be my wife, I really think we should get on very well."

At the conclusion of this incoherent proposal Nora rose hastily from her seat to express the indignation she ought to have felt at it, but sat down again in surprised disgust at her own pusillanimity. The indignation wasn't there.

She felt this to be alarming. To be proposed to by a draper's assistant, and not to feel insulted, showed a moral perversion, a deadness to the most sacred instincts of caste feeling, which at the moment shocked her. She understood now why Lou thought her almost if not quite mad. From a society point of view her feelings and actions were unconventional to the point of insanity.

She took refuge from contemplating the alarming problem of her own mind by taking up the humorous side of the situation.

"Really," she said with a smile, "this is romantic to absurdity! To get an offer of marriage in a prison."

Wilson took the remark seriously.

"I have no doubt it is absurd," he replied, "and I certainly had no intention of telling you that I loved you so soon—indeed I didn't think I should ever have courage to tell you at all, but when you were in trouble it seemed as if I couldn't help it coming out; I wanted so to have the right to aid and comfort you."

"You are far too good for me," murmured the girl with tears in her eyes, and she meant what she said.

There was a simple generosity and tenderness about Wilson which seemed to her exceedingly noble. She felt that she was not likely to have many lovers who would seek her hand simply because she was in trouble, and they wanted to have the right to comfort her. And his wooing was not dictated by mercenary motives. To Nora, who had been brought up to regard herself as the almost predestined prey of the "needy fortune-hunter", a man who would offer himself to a woman who he believed had not ten shillings in the world was a phenomenon as desirable as rare.

But then he was not a gentleman; at least he had not the position nor the education of one. Her friends, each and all, would be scandalised at her marrying—good gracious! She caught herself up with a start. Could it be that she was thinking without horror of even the possibility of marrying a shop-walker in a draper's establishment!

While she was debating with herself Wilson spoke again:

"I am afraid I have startled, perhaps annoyed you, Miss Adams. I had no right to be so abrupt. Don't give me an answer now; take time to think over the matter, and perhaps your reply may be favourable. I hope it will; but, if it isn't, don't let my—I mean the little incident of this morning, exercise any pressure on you. It is a thing I would have done for any lady of my acquaintance. I will leave you now; but if I can be of any service to you, pray command me. You will always find me at Blacklock's, you know, and I should be proud to be of any use to you."

He was moving towards the door, when Nora gasped out:

"Don't go!"

"He has the heart of a gentleman, at least," she said to herself; "and I'll never



again have such a disinterested suitor. I won't be such a goose as to let a chance of happiness slip for the sake of conventional ideas and the opinions of people for whose hearts, brains, and consciences I have not the slightest respect."

She rose from her seat and held out both her hands to Wilson.

"Don't go," she repeated, "till I have told you how much I appreciate the compliment you have paid me. I don't want time to come to a decision; I always make up my mind at once. You are too good for me—a hundred times too good. I am only a very silly and self-willed girl; but since you love me—if you want to marry me—I will try to make you a good wife, and I shall be very proud to have you for my husband."

### CHAPTER III.

HAVING, so to speak, crossed the Rubicon, Nora, woman-like, began to tremble at what she had done. She withdrew her hands, and sat down again.

"He'll kiss me now," she said to herself, "and then I shall hate him."

Fortunately, no thought of taking advantage of the privileges of his position entered Wilson's mind. He did not even approach her.

"Thank you, Miss Adams," he said gravely. "You are very good, and if I can help it you shall never regret what you have said to-day." After a pause, he said: "Don't you think we had better go? You must have had enough of this place. I will wait outside till you are ready."

He moved towards the door of the cell. As he reached it, she stood before him.

"You have never kissed me yet!" she said in tones of deepest reproach. This ceremony concluded, she let him go, and tried to arrange her somewhat dishevelled hair. "I must look a terrible fright," she reflected. "He must care for me very much not to have repented on seeing me."

"Let us get to one of the parks, or some other quiet place," she said when they were outside. "I have a great deal to say to you."

But when they were seated in Kensington Gardens, Nora was still silent and embarrassed. She had meant to play the part of Queen Cophetua, to announce to Wilson what a happy stroke he had made that day, and thereby re-assume the dignity she felt she had lost. But when the time to speak came, she was conscious only that she had been acting a lie for the last ten

days, and masquerading in a fashion for which a sensible man might reasonably despise her. Nora Clyne, who had never before in her life feared mortal man or woman, stood in awe of this shopman, who had no other qualification to her respect than his simple honesty and his regard for her.

It was Wilson who began the conversation on the most matter-of-fact basis.

"I have been thinking, for some time, of leaving Blacklock's and setting up for myself," he said, "and I fancy this would be a good opportunity to do it. I have a little money—about two hundred pounds—that my uncle left me; so I can afford to do it without much risk. Still, if you think it unwise—"

"Certainly not," replied Nora; "you couldn't possibly keep on good terms both with that creature and with me. But," she spoke meekly, and he did not perceive the mischievous light in her eye, "will you want me to serve in the shop?"

"No—no. I will work for you. Perhaps you wouldn't mind helping me in the buying of goods, however? You have better taste than I."

"I will do whatever you like; and I want to tell you that I—I have a little money, too."

"Why, I—I thought—"

"Yes; I know. You thought I couldn't pay half-a-sovereign; but you are wrong. I—I'm quite rich. I have two thousand a year; and I only went into Blacklock's shop as a caprice, to see what the life was like. And my name isn't Adams at all; it is Nora Clyne, and I feel I have deceived you abominably."

"Deceived me! No; but I never suspected this. If I had—oh, Miss Ad—I mean, Miss Cl—I don't know what to call you."

"I think you had better call me Nora," suggested Miss Clyne sweetly.

"If I had known this I should never have ventured to tell you I cared for you," said he.

"And I should have lost my best chance of happiness," said she.

"Now that you have told me," he went on, "I feel that I must withdraw."

"Withdraw?" cried Nora.

"Yes."

"If you do I shall call you a mercenary wretch."

"Mercenary! Not that, Miss Clyne, surely."

"Yes, mercenary; for if you give me up

because I happen to be rich, it will be evident that you care more for my money than for me, that it and your own pride are of more importance in your eyes than I and my happiness. You can do as you like, of course; you can give me up—you can jilt me," she said vindictively, "because I happen to be something different from what you thought; but if you do I shall despise you. And—and I respected you so much, and thought you above nasty mean considerations of this sort."

"Oh, this is terrible!" cried poor Wilson in genuine despair.

To give up the girl you love out of respect to propriety, and to be assured by her that she will scorn you for your sacrifice, is undeniably a severe trial.

"But think what your friends will say," he protested still.

"I know what they will say, and I don't care a straw for any of them. I haven't the slightest respect for them or their prejudices," insisted Nora.

And just as she uttered the last words who should draw near but Mrs. Penfeather.

She was meditating on a very serious subject (the fashion of a new dinner-gown), but she came out of her reverie at the sound of voices, and lifting up her eyes she saw her cousin.

"Why, Nora, can that be you?" she exclaimed; "I did not expect to see you here at this hour. And this gentleman?"

Lou gazed enquiringly at Wilson, vaguely familiar with his face, but unable to localise it.

"This gentleman, Lou," said Nora boldly, "is Mr. Wilson, whom you may have noticed in Mr. Blacklock's shop, and whom you must now know as my future husband."

("There!" she added in a low tone to her lover, "you can't, for shame's sake, throw me over now.")

"Your future—what?" cried Mrs. Penfeather in the one moment of agonised doubt that preceded her being swallowed by a vast wave of despair. Then, as the latter engulfed her, she added: "I might have known this would be the end of it. Oh, this is terrible! What am I to do? What shall I say to Sir George?"

"There is no need for you to say anything to Sir George Radford," replied Nora; "I will announce my engagement to him."

A change, an expression of surprise and sternness, had come over Wilson's face as Nora mentioned her ex-guardian's name. He stepped between the two ladies.

"Are you speaking of Sir George Radford, of Swarfedale Hall?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Nora, surprised in turn.

"May I ask what relation he bears to you?"

"He was my guardian till last January, when I came of age. Do you know him?"

"Only by name; but I knew his sister when I was a boy."

"His sister!" exclaimed Nora. "She who——"

Lou interrupted:

"You must come home with me, Nora. I won't have a scene here. As for that— that person—I will say nothing to him. I will telegraph for Sir George to come up, and he will arrange with him. I suppose money will do it?"

"No, madam," said Wilson firmly; "money will not do it. I have no claim on Miss Clyne, but what she chooses to permit. If she dismisses me, I shall go without protest; but no one else in the world shall induce me to give her up. And perhaps Sir George Radford may be less opposed to me than you think."

Mrs. Penfeather protested only by a contemptuous sniff.

Nora whispered:

"Arthur, you are splendid!"

"How do you know my name?" he asked in surprise.

"One finds out those things," she answered vaguely, not caring to confess that her ex-companion, Miss Jones, was her informant.

"Sir George Radford will probably be here the day after to-morrow," said Mrs. Penfeather. "You will hear from him. Till then, I forbid you to have any communication with Miss Clyne."

"I do not acknowledge your authority to make such a condition," replied Wilson; "but I will comply with it."

And Mrs. Penfeather bore her cousin away.

"It is better not to see her again at present," he reflected when he was alone. "If it was only caprice and self-will that made her accept me, she will change her mind when she finds her friends against it. If she is firm I suppose I must bend my pride to make it easier for her. It's a strange chance! I wonder how the old gentleman will take it!"

Two days later Wilson received a note, dated from Mrs. Penfeather's house at Kensington, in which Sir George Radford presented his compliments to Mr. Blank

Wilson, and begged to enclose a cheque for fifty pounds, in consideration for which, Sir George hoped Mr. Wilson would release Miss Clyne from a hasty and ill-considered promise into which he had entrapped her—an act which, Sir George felt bound to state, could only be accounted for by Mr. Wilson's being ignorant of the manners and obligations of a gentleman. If fifty pounds were not sufficient, Mr. Wilson was requested to state at what price he rated his claim on Miss Clyne. Any reasonable demand would be complied with. This courteous note Mr. Wilson answered in person.

Sir George Radford, a stubborn and self-willed lord of the soil, had thought it would be an easy task to crush this "counter-jumper", and had already intimated to Mrs. Penfeather, that only her weakness and stupidity were responsible for the said counter-jumper's presumption not having been nipped in the bud forty-eight hours before.

"I will settle the matter in half an hour, I promise you," said he.

Sir George had arranged the scene in his own mind. It was to be a mere auction. Wilson would bluster, of course, but as the baronet offered more and more for the redemption of Nora's promise, he would calm down and accept the largest sum he could obtain. Sir George was prepared to pay pretty dearly for the girl's freedom. He had fixed on five hundred pounds as his ultimatum, and did not expect to ransom her for less. But that sum was reached and Wilson stood firm.

"You're an avaricious scoundrel!" said the baronet, who had determined in advance to overcome the shopman by displaying the superior breeding of a gentleman. "How much do you want?"

"Nothing but Miss Clyne's assurance that she wishes to be free from her promise to me," was the reply.

"Well, I give you that assurance."

"Excuse me; you have no authority to speak for Miss Clyne. I must have the assurance from her own lips or in her own writing."

As Sir George knew very well that he could not obtain this, he fell a-swearing once more, and in the course of his remarks was very severe on the impertinence of such a one as Wilson aspiring to the hand of a lady of family and fortune.

"I admit the superiority of fortune," interrupted Wilson; "but, as to family—may I ask if you consider Miss Clyne's birth superior to your own?"

Sir George gasped at the mere suggestion of such a thing. Nobody's birth was, or could be, better than his. On principle, he believed in himself, and all thereunto belonging.

"Certainly not," he snorted. "The superiority is, indeed, on the other side, though the difference is not great."

"Not great enough to make a marriage between the two families out of the question?"

"No, assuredly. If either of my boys had lived, I would have had him married to Nora long before this, and saved a world of trouble."

"And yet, Sir George," the young man went on, "you think the wife who would not be more than good enough for your son far too good for your nephew."

"My nephew! I have no nephew."

"Yes, you have. You had a sister who married the organist of a village church."

"Who disgraced herself irretrievably by running away with a piano-tuner," translated Sir George.

"Well, if you choose to put it that way," said Wilson calmly. "The fact remains that Clara Radford, your sister, married Arthur Wilson, and became my mother. I brought the necessary certificates with me, thinking I might have to mention the relationship between us. I am not proud of it; I have never spoken of it to anyone; and if I did not care very much for Miss Clyne I would not own it now."

"You—you're not proud of it!" stammered Sir George, in utter amazement. He had glanced over the papers Wilson laid before him, and was disgusted to find they were evidently genuine.

"No," replied his nephew; "I am much more proud of my other uncle—my father's brother—who took me to his own home when my parents died. It was he who supported your sister during the last months of her life; brought me up, educated me, as well as he had means to do, and did what he thought best to set me up in life. I am proud of my kinship with him, Sir George; I am not proud to be of the same blood as you."

"This alters everything," said Sir George, ignoring Wilson's last words. "You are not merely my nephew; my own children being dead, you are my heir—the future owner of Swarfedale Hall."

"I never knew that," said Wilson, surprised in turn.

"But it's the fact," returned the baronet in a tone of grumbling content. "Of course

this makes all the difference in the world. My nephew is a good-enough match for anybody, and you may take Nora with all my heart—that is, if she'll have you, when she learns that you are of decent birth, but I don't think she will. Her fancy for you is mere romance and obstinacy; it will vanish when she finds out that I have no objection to the match."

"I venture to hope you are wrong," said Wilson gravely. "I think better of Miss Clyne's judgment than to believe what you say."

"That's your vanity, because she was ready to jump into your arms. But I'll make her marry you."

"You are very kind; but even if I did not think your intervention would be useless, I should prefer not to profit by it. Nora must take me of her own free will or not at all."

"Well, she won't, I tell you."

But she did. Nora Clyne's self-will was not the mere obstinacy of a fool, and she was glad to find circumstances to justify her choice. She was determined to marry Arthur Wilson, but she was woman enough to like him better as her guardian's heir than as Mr. Blacklock's assistant. But she has never regretted her experience of life in a draper's shop; nor has Wilson found cause to wish he had not married a wife with a mind of her own.

### "ROYAL"

By B. DEMPSTER.

#### CHAPTER I.

It certainly was not half so pleasant as she had expected. She was even beginning to wonder if her father had not been right, after all, when he had so strongly objected to bring her West with him. Then a sudden recollection of previous holidays spent with that prim aunt—of long days divided between endless seams of sewing and dreary walks in a dismal town, made her shudder. No. Decidedly this was preferable. But it was certainly dull, when her father went away for a long day's surveying, and left her alone—as it happened to-day, for instance—with only an Indian guard.

She was standing at the door of a kind of shanty, hastily knocked up for her shelter about a fortnight before. She was looking out with—it must be confessed—

decidedly bored eyes upon the grand view before her.

Endless depths of dark pine-woods, tumbled masses of granite crags, gleams of foaming water, splashing and falling from giddy heights of cliff. To the right lay the entrance to the cañon—a fearful fissure, nearly three hundred feet deep—its walls, here, almost perpendicular cliffs of granite, there, broken and covered with woods of red-boled pine; and, between them, rushing, and eddying, and tumbling in foaming rapids over the rocks of its bed, flowed the dark river. This cañon, with its gloom, and its mystery, and brooding silence, possessed a powerful fascination for the girl.

She had never ventured far into it, for her father, fearing her adventurous spirit, had forbidden her to wander from her Indian guard. Hitherto she had obeyed. She turned and looked towards it, and slowly into her bored eyes came a great longing. Suddenly, with a quick, swift gesture of her hands; which seemed all in keeping with a bright, alert look, habitual to her eyes, and the breezy, graceful life of her slender figure; she turned away and ran quickly round to the back of the shanty. The Indian woman was there, washing some things they had used for their morning meal, and, as she bent over the platters, she did not hear the girl's light footfall.

Miss Patience Garfield stood for a few seconds gazing at her, a curious look, half disdain, half dismay, on her own young face. The woman was so ugly, and old, and wrinkled.

Then a swift look of penitence flashed into the expressive eyes, and Miss Patience snatched off a string of beads from her neck, and the next second the astonished squaw found them clasped round her own skinny throat.

"You can keep them!" said the girl, nodding violently at her, as she stepped back to see the effect. The effect was not good, though the woman, who had been coveting them for days, was wild with delight at the gift, and grinned, and gesticulated, and thanked her in an eager torrent of broken English.

"They make her look uglier than ever!" thought Patience. "But I mustn't call her names, though it is dreadful to be ugly—I'm glad I'm not. When papa is a little richer I shall make him take me to Europe; and then—oh——!"

Such a vista of courts, and balls, and



noble lovers opened out before her that it quite took her breath away. For Miss Patience Garfield was intensely ambitious, and fully meant to end her days, a duchess at the least. But the recollection of the cañon came back, and she forgot the brilliant social triumphs of the future. She explained to the woman that she was going for a walk, but she would be back by the time her father came home, and, in the meantime, neither the women nor the men were to come and look for her. Having made this arrangement to prevent being worried, as she called it, she ran off into the shanty, and came out a few minutes later, with a little packet in her hand. It was her lunch for the day.

Half an hour later she was well into the gorge. The wavering lines of hazy heat which floated over all the valley beyond, did not reach there. It was cool with deep silences of shade, and white foam of rushing waters.

How the next few hours went by the girl never knew. It was a vision of perfect delight and wonder—ininitely more awe-inspiring than her highest flights of imagination could form. She could do nothing but wander on, bewildered, entranced, humble.

She did not even sit down for her luncheon, but ate it as she went. She had left the side of the river, for its banks, all broken and rough with boulders, made walking impossible. She had found a way to mount up through the trees which here grew right down to the water's-edge. It had been difficult climbing, but the sides of the gorge at this part were not steep, and the higher she climbed the more the scenery changed. On every side of her lay now only endless vistas of trees. She debated a little whether she would go on. Then the wonders of the wood proved too much for her. She and her father were returning to-morrow, to town-life again. She would never have such another opportunity. She might go just a little way, and then come back.

Two or three gigantic trunks of trees, struck down by a storm, marked the place by which she had ascended from the ravine below. She could easily find it again by using these as a landmark, and once back in the gorge, she had only to keep the water on her right hand to return in safety to the entrance. She plunged deeper into the woods. She must have gone a long way, for by-and-by she was

forced to confess that she could not take another step. She sank down on the ground, leaning back against a tree.

The silence, the air fragrant with the aromatic breath of pines, the exhaustion following upon intense delight and physical fatigue, overcame her. The upright boles of larch and pine seemed to sway and bend in mystic dance before her, and her tired eyes closed. The slanting rays of light advanced gradually between the red boles, and flickered across the needle-strewn earth, gliding softly athwart her sleeping face, as if leaving upon it a farewell caress, before they followed their king in his journey to the West. One by one they died out from the silent forest, and shadows which had been in waiting all day in the green depths to take the place of those golden rays, stole up, too, from their lurking-places, and touched the face of the girl.

But neither the sunshine nor the shadow awoke her.

When she did awake, at last, it was to wild, ungovernable terror. She opened her eyes to a wood dim with dusky twilight. She sprang to her feet with a cry. Where was she? Miles away from any human being; alone in that dreadful forest, and the night coming on! The paroxysm of terror was perhaps the reaction from the intense excitement in which she had been living through all day. But at least the discovery she made was enough to frighten even the bravest girl.

But the sharp terror subsided with the knowledge that she must not delay a moment. She must hurry back to the place where she could descend into the cañon.

She was stiff in every limb. She was faint for want of food, for her luncheon had been a slight one. She ought to have been home long ago. Her father would be back, anxious and worried about her. This last thought gave her fresh strength. She began running, too eager at first even to feel frightened.

But after a little it seemed as if she would never come to those trees she had taken for a landmark. And all the time every step she had taken had carried her farther from them. The terrible thought came to her at last that this was so. She stopped, and listening, strained her eyes into the gloom which was closing rapidly round her. Far off she could hear the dim sound of roaring waters, but she could not tell on which hand they lay. She dared not stop,

and ran on again, her breath coming in short, panting sobs, her eyes growing wilder with the fears torturing her brain. She had to sit down at last to rest for a moment. She tried to think. If she could but find her way down to the river! but her terrified thoughts refused to guide her. She was not even conscious now that she was on level ground, and that to reach the waters at all she ought to be descending. She rose and hurried on again. The night had come. The moon had not yet risen; but she dared not wait for it. She stumbled and slipped at every step, striking and bruising herself against the trunks of the trees. But the sharp agony of physical pain was nothing, for all the forest seemed full of horrible shadowy arms clutching at her. The place was alive with things she could not see. Every twisted root across her path was a deadly serpent, awakened by her blind, stumbling feet, to pursue her through the black night. Every rustle of the leaves was the stealthy footfall of a wild-beast creeping up to tear her to pieces. And above all and through all rang the jeering voices of the waters, growing louder and louder every minute, horrible in their wicked triumph. How long she ran and walked, and ran on again, she did not know. She was delirious with pain and fear. The voices of the waters were so loud now that they deafened her. They were all round her. Ah, here they were, at her very feet. The moon had risen, and a pale radiance gleamed on the rushing flood and dark rock, and as it fell on her it silenced her delirium into peace. No; the waters were not mocking, hideous voices goading her to despair; they were faithful friends calling and guiding her.

They would lead her back. She stood out for a few seconds a slight figure, amid the towering crags and endless pines, the light of the moon touching her, and bringing her into relief against the dark shadows of the boulders. Then sight and strength and will failed her, and with a cry she flung out her hands to the roaring waters leaping up at her feet, and fell heavily forward.

#### CHAPTER II.

IF he had another name no one ever knew it. When he had first made his appearance in the West, a miner had nicknamed him Royal, in acknowledgment of an aristocratic refinement of bearing, which distinguished him from the rest of the company.

This subtle difference was the only thing that distinguished him from the rest of his surroundings. In all other things he was the same as his acquaintance. He worked like a navvy when he came upon a hopeful claim. He had days of luck and months of ill-luck. But the fact of being on the verge of starvation for weeks made no difference in his mode of proceeding when the luck turned. For a month or so he would live royally, and then, when funds fell, starve again as miserably. He gambled greatly, and swore more than occasionally, and was quite ready with his Derringer. He had followed Fortune up and down the country till he was a familiar figure at most of the camps and miners' town-resorts. There was one of their amusements that he certainly did not indulge in. He was never seen anything else but sober. His mates said that it was because he had an unusually strong head. That may have been, but, at any rate, he was never found incapable of managing his own affairs. Not that the managing did him always credit. He had bungled them considerably at the present, for instance. He had been mixed up in a peculiarly unpleasant, not to say dubious affray, and the result was that he had been put outside the town of Jeanville, this 13th day of July, with the agreeable warning that if he set foot in it again, he would have a bullet in his body as surely as that a hundred boys were eager to put it there.

He had been summarily tried by a committee elected from them, and the verdict would not fail to be carried out. He knew that, and calmly concurred in the judgment, for the good reason that he had nothing to say against it. If he had been one of the committee, and another man in his place, he would have voted the same sentence, and cheerfully carried it out, too, if the necessity had arisen. If a man is discovered trifling with a fellow-creature's accounts and appropriating results, he deserves to be put out of the way to prevent such mistakes in the future.

He had not exactly played that delicate game himself, but he had espoused the quarrel of a friend who had. They would have both shared the same fate, only, by some freak of fortune, his friend was lucky enough to escape. There were other charges brought against Royal. Probably these added to the severity of his sentence, for one of the committeemen was personally interested in one of the other matters.

Indeed, but for his brother judges actively reasoning with him by holding him down on his seat, he would have made short work, there and then, of the prisoner.

Royal had put nearly a day's journey between himself and Jeanville. It ought to have been two, only he was waiting for something. The man whose quarrel he had espoused might join him at this point. It was an old waiting-place of theirs. Now, why he had taken up arms in defence of a man guilty of a weakness of which he, personally, strongly disapproved, no one but Royal could have told. Probably, he could not have told himself. Cheating was not the worst of that other man's failings. He was a hopeless member of society generally. He was scarcely ever sober. Yet he looked little more than a boy. He had fair hair, and eyes blue as a girl's, and a manner almost as winning when he was capable of having any manners at all, and, as so often happens, this sweetness of disposition accompanied a hopeless weakness of character. Royal knew this Dolly to be a blackguard, and, what was more to the point, a backboneless one. But, in spite of his cynical judgment of the boy's capabilities, Royal was conscious of a feeling of disappointment that he should have bolted and left his champion in the lurch. But he might still make his way to this shelter; and as he would probably be unable to proceed farther without assistance, Royal stayed to take him on with him. He was not worth waiting for, but Royal waited. Half-way down a deep cleft in the cañon was a small cave. It was reached with great difficulty from above, and had afforded shelter to Royal and Dolly on more than one occasion.

From it, winding, intricate passages—some so low that they could only be entered on hands and knees—reached far into the cliff, with another outlet, of which no one apparently yet knew but themselves. The entrance of the cave, which was little more than a slit in the face of the rock, was so covered with shrubs and overhanging trees that they themselves had only found it by accident. The only light that fell in it entered by another larger opening, some distance higher up, and itself inaccessible. So the place was a safe enough shelter, for a few hours at least. But when Royal reached it, Dolly was not there.

After a short sleep, Royal came out of the cave which opened on to a ledge of rock, and made his way down to a lower and

broader terrace, which, completely hidden from above by the dense pine-woods, commanded a narrow glimpse of the river rushing through the gorge below. It was about eleven o'clock. The moon, high above the cañon, touched the sombre green of the pines with silver, and kissed the dark waters into light. The man's alert, far-seeing eyes, accustomed always to watch, fell on a boulder lying half in the water. Its upper surface, resting on the bank, was splashed with the foam of the hurrying waters, and it glistened in the moonlight. There were no shadows now.

Stay. He had made a mistake. There were shadows. One at least. A huddled-up shape, with a ghastly resemblance to a human figure lying by the side of the boulder.

"Dolly, and drunk as usual!" exclaimed the man with bitter contempt. But even as he said it he was plunging down over the rough ground to his friend's rescue.

It took him nearly a quarter of an hour to reach the boulder. It did not take him a minute to leap from it down to the figure lying by its side, and lift it in his arms.

"A woman! A child! Good Heavens!" he murmured, looking down with something like shocked eyes at the death-like face resting on his breast. The slender figure was still and lifeless, the hands cold as death itself, and the dress all damp and heavy with dew and the spray of the water. Another step or two forward and she would have fallen into the torrent.

There was something almost ludicrous in the perplexed amazement with which the man regarded her. He felt almost afraid to touch her hands as he tried to chafe them into warmth. He inveighed against his folly and want of forethought in not bringing his flask of brandy down with him. No chafing would bring back the warmth to them, and at first he thought she was dead. But a faint beating of her pulses told him she was still alive. He dared not leave her to go back for the brandy. A sudden thought of the committeeman's threats, for the first time in his life made him anxious. He might have tracked him, and was perhaps already lurking near. For George was not always particular about fighting on the square. He could not leave the girl alone. He lifted her again in his arms, and began to ascend the ravine. When Royal reached the cave, he laid her down on his blanket, and, taking off his coat, wrapped her in it. He found his flask, and kneeling by her side forced some brandy down her



throat, and rubbed her hands and temples with it.

Just as he was beginning to despair, her lips moved.

"Father—father!" they moaned.

Royal hastily applied some more brandy.

The girl's eyes opened at last. She looked up and saw the man's face bending over her. A terrified cry broke from her, and she struggled up, her eyes filled with delirious terror.

"Father! Those horrible faces! They are like death. Drive them away! Oh, they make me afraid!"

Now as Royal was a remarkably handsome man, the address was confusing. He drew hastily back, and a sudden chill went to his own heart. Was it a presentiment? But it vanished so quickly that it scarcely seemed to have been, and he went to the side of the girl again.

"You are quite safe," he said, rather jerkily, for the circumstances were unusual to his life. "I'll fetch your father directly. Take a little more of this."

The girl was lying with closed eyes again, faintly sobbing and moaning. He knelt down beside her, and, gently putting his arm under her head, raised her. She was shivering with cold, and her eyes were dazed and wandering. Probably his generous use of the flask saved her life, for she was sinking from exhaustion, and chilled to the bone from exposure to the night air and the spray of the water. When she opened her eyes again, they were beginning to understand. She sat up, though the movement forced a cry from her. In her fall she had twisted her foot, and the sharpness of the pain made her nearly faint again. But the remembrance of all that had happened rushed over her like a flood, and she forgot everything else.

"Oh, what have I done?" she sobbed. "Papa will be just wild with fright. Oh, how wicked I have been!" every beat of stronger returning life sharpening her remorse and misery. "Oh, do find him! He will be mad looking for me!"

She caught at the tall dark figure standing by her, too remorseful even to be surprised, or to wonder at her surroundings.

And in a breathless voice, broken by sobs, she told Royal what she had done, entreating him again and again to go and find her father, or to help her to him. The request was awkward; Royal felt it to be so. The girl was powerless to walk herself, and he could not go away and leave her there alone. The distance she had

wandered amazed him. Her father would probably be looking for her miles away. After some time, he persuaded her to wait till daybreak at least, and try and rest a little. He cut off the tiny shoe, for the foot was too swelled to allow of its being removed another way, and before she even knew what he was going to do, had deftly twisted the dislocated ankle into its position again, though the sharp cry the sudden wrench forced from her, made him turn as white as a girl. But he said nothing, for Royal was not much given to words. He started off and returned almost immediately with a strip of his blanket saturated with water. He bound up the foot as well as he could, and made her eat a little food, and then, persuading her to lie down, he covered her with what covering he had, and left her. Outside, he made his way again down to the terrace below, where, hidden by overhanging bushes, he could see the entrance to the cave, without being seen himself by possibly watching eyes. And there till daybreak he kept guard.

#### CHAPTER III.

THE sun was high in the heavens when Miss Patience Garfield awoke from a deep sleep which had mercifully come to her after her dreary experiences. As she stared about her, it seemed at first like a dream. The cave, with its jagged, fissured sides and uneven floor, strewn with broken boulders, was warm and light with sunshine. She stared about her, unable at first to understand what she was doing in so romantic a sleeping-chamber. Her first attempt at moving proved to her that it was no dream, at any rate. She was stiff and aching in every limb, and her foot was intolerably painful. But the thought of her father's trouble made her forget all personal suffering. There were no signs of her friend of the night before, and a great terror fell on her that she had been left alone again.

She struggled to her feet, and though each step almost forced a cry from her, she made her way to the entrance. She pulled aside the branches and looked out. To her relief she saw him cooking on the terrace below. He caught sight of her almost as soon as she appeared, and, raising his hat gravely, came up towards her. Curiously enough, even in the midst of her own pain and mental trouble, she noticed the same subtle difference in his bearing that the rougher miners had already discovered. This man was not of her father's order.



He belonged to one, with which, not even the school where she had been sent to learn the refinements of "elegant" society had made her familiar. Then another thought struck her as she glanced down to where the river flashed between the trees in the sunlight below.

"Did you really do that?" she asked with a gasp, as he stepped up beside her.

"Do what?"

"Why, fetch me along from down there?"

He followed her gesture with his eyes.

"Well, I never!" said the girl as he did not answer. "It was real good of you," and she flushed faintly.

The next second she was enquiring eagerly after her father. She sighed impatiently when she heard that nothing had been seen of him. But Royal cut short any further enquiries by telling her to go back into the cave, and he would bring her something to eat. There was a touch of cool command in his manner which she resented hotly, not being accustomed to it.

Then she remembered what she owed him, and submitted. She found some water in a hollow of a rock inside the cave. She bathed her face in it, and tried to smooth her dishevelled hair, wondering with a very tearful amusement whether Nature provided it for such emergencies. She did not know that it had been placed there in the early morning for her use. Royal would not wake her. He had intended the night before to push on at daybreak. But her presence changed the matter; as he could not leave the place now, there was no occasion to wake her. Sleep was the best thing she could have. Any difficulties about his own position were dismissed without a second thought—that is, if there had been a first thought at all.

She was sitting, very nearly exhausted again with the pain of moving, on a low bank of rock against the side of the cave, when he entered. Her white face seemed to disturb him, for he looked as if he were going to say something, and then, changing his mind apparently, set to work in silence to place food before her.

The meal was rough enough. There was only a long clasp-knife and a fork with one prong to eat it with. But she was hungry, and her spirits even rose a little at the adventure. He went out and reconnoitred again, carefully extinguishing every trace of the fire. He was some little time gone. When he returned the girl had ceased eating.

"I thought you had gone right away!" she exclaimed quickly, a look of relief flashing into her eyes.

"Gone away!" he echoed.

"Please forgive me!" she exclaimed in quick penitence and remorse, confused by the look her words had brought into his face. "I don't know what's the matter with me. I'm not a coward generally. I guess I feel nervous after yesterday—and there's papa."

She looked away so that he should not see her eyes. Then, to make amends for her ungrateful doubt, she began to eat again. In consideration of her fears, apparently, he stayed in the cave this time, sitting down a little way from her. She stopped suddenly in her eating and looked at him.

"It must be very dull for you sitting there. Why don't you smoke?"

Royal flushed a deep red.

"I don't know," he said slowly.

"I——"

A sudden recollection of days when such things as women's drawing-rooms had been a part of his daily life came back to him, and he checked himself, his eyes full of a far-off vision.

"Now, I should just like to know what you are thinking of," she said abruptly, holding her knife and fork upright in her hand, in a meditative, if inelegant position. The attitude seemed so incongruous with the purely patrician beauty of her face, that he laughed slightly.

"Now, that's what I call rude," she said.

But she laughed good-humouredly and showed the loveliest teeth in the world.

"You are laughing at me. I know it," with a peremptory little flourish of the knife. "No; you needn't feel scared and apologise. I don't mind. I laugh at most people. I laughed at old Marie yesterday because she was ugly, and I do believe yesterday was a punishment."

She looked so solemn that he nearly laughed again, but changed his mind.

"Do you think we are always punished immediately for our spitefulness, and wickedness, and things?" she asked in a slightly awed tone, after a few seconds' silence.

"It depends, I suppose," he said. "But it comes sooner or later;" and his thoughts returned to the far-off vision.

But the problem was too difficult for the girl, or, perhaps, something in his face recalled her first question.

"Now, do tell me what you were thinking of! I've had a lovely meal, and want

to talk. I shall cry if I don't. How much longer are we to wait here?" and her eyes grew misty again. "I'm dreadfully ashamed, but I can't help it. If you had behaved as badly as I have, you would feel silly too."

"What was it you wanted to know?" he asked hastily, to divert her thoughts, as she sat there struggling hard not to give way.

"Heaps of things!" she said, but her curiosity was decidedly dispirited. "What made you look so, and why you don't smoke when you have nothing else to do? Papa always does, and so do all the men I know."

"Don't you mind?" he asked.

"Mind!" her violet eyes opened wide.

"Of course I don't; who does?"

"Some ladies do."

The quick bright eyes watching him read something in his face again.

"Gracious! I guess I never met ladies who minded—not even Miss Baxter, and she's just fearfully elegant. That's where I go to school. But I'm finished now. Would you say I was finished?"

A slight smile parted his lips again. He put up his hand to hide it, but her terribly quick eyes caught it.

"There, you're just thinking again of those other ladies. I'd give something to have a sight of them. They must be fearfully particular."

She laughed with a little mockery. But there was with it a sense of being at a disadvantage, which irritated her, for something told her that these "ladies" he mentioned, had the same subtle touch of difference to her and hers as he had.

"Are you a real miner?" she asked abruptly.

"Yes," and he laughed softly; "mostly."

"And when you're not?"

He seemed to have a difficulty again in answering her question, and his eyes looked away for a second from the frank, curious eyes gazing at him.

She laughed again.

"You are close," she said. "I wouldn't go into any business I was ashamed of speaking of, anyway. What is your name? You never asked mine. Mine is Patience Garfield. What's yours?"

"Royal," he answered laconically.

"Why, what a funny name!" Then she suddenly stopped. "I know why they called you that," she said. "There's something about you which makes you different to most men I know. I guess those ladies

you talk of, are like it too. I haven't got it, have I?"

Neither had heard a stealthy footfall creeping along the ledge outside the cave. The feet stopped, and a cautious hand drew the leaf-screen aside to let a face peer through.

Miss Patience's bright, imperious eyes were fixed on Royal's face, commanding an answer, while he in his turn sat looking at her with an amount of embarrassment in his, which precluded any other thought.

Before he could see a way out of his difficulty, a voice slightly thick and hoarse broke in on his perplexity:

"Well, I'm blessed, if you ain't the most sneaking old cuss I've met, Royal! This is what you do to amuse yourself when you retire from Jeanville. She is a little beauty! You needn't have kept her so close if——"

Miss Patience Garfield had a glimpse of a pale, dissipated face with blue eyes and rough fair hair staring at her. The next second it waved violently to and fro in the grasp of an iron hand closing round its neck, as with a smothered exclamation, her friend hurled himself upon it. Then the fair head, and white furious face bent over it, disappeared, with their respective bodies, through the screen of branches and leaves. The branches swept back into their places again, and there was a thud as if the two bodies had suddenly and heavily arrived together on firm ground some considerable distance below the level of the cave. It had all passed in a moment.

Miss Patience Garfield stood where she had sprung to her feet, staring after the vision which had vanished as suddenly as it had appeared. Then she shuddered from head to foot, and sank down again, trembling violently, on her seat.

#### CHAPTER IV.

OUTSIDE there was a profound silence for a minute as Royal, stumbling to his feet on the lower terrace, stood waiting for Dolly to rise. This was rather a long process, and when he did get up he made a savage lunge at Royal, which necessitated another gentle reminder from the latter's fist, and Dolly measured his length on the ground again.

"Get up," said Royal, his face still very pale, "and tell me if you want another."

Apparently Dolly did not, for he staggered to his feet and smiled quite cheerfully.

"You're a brute, Royal!" he said placidly.

Royal, with a contemptuous gesture, turned from him, and stood staring for a few seconds down at the river. Then he turned to him again.

"Why didn't you come sooner?"

"I've been coming since the night before last," said Dolly calmly, as he sat stanching a considerable cut on his face. "It took some time. Now don't jaw——"

"It isn't any good," said Royal, his eyes full of bitterness as he saw the unsteady hands. "I've been wanting you." He paced the terrace for a few seconds, then stopped, and in a short, curt fashion gave an account of how he had met the girl, and his own difficulties with regard to her. "George is out," he added, "and I couldn't go myself."

"Ah, I see; if luck were against you, it would have been awkward," said Dolly, entering into the case as if no scene disturbing to his own peace had arisen from it. "He won't hesitate at getting the first shot."

"Yes," said Royal; "and if it had succeeded she would have been left here alone."

"Certainly," said Dolly in a depressed tone; then, quite cheerfully: "I should have found her."

The other looked at him.

"Much good you would have been," he said, again with contempt; "you would have probably been drunk!"

"Very probably. But I'll keep sober now if it's any good," said Dolly.

"It wouldn't have done for me to take her with me, for I still might have come across George, and everything would have depended on my luck then."

"Rather!" The tone was significant, and Royal seemed to grow paler.

"There's only one thing to be done—you must go. George doesn't trouble about you, so long as you keep out of Jeanville."

Dolly's face betrayed opposition. He was tired and footsore, and had been looking forward to a peaceful rest in the security of the cave. Royal saw the hesitation.

He laid his hand suddenly on the other's shoulder, twisting him round, so that he could see straight into his eyes.

"Look here, Carleton," he said slowly, "you haven't been so long from the old place that you have forgotten everything. That girl in there, is a woman such as you and I used to know. You insulted her

shamefully a few minutes ago. If I had shot you down, it wouldn't have been sufficient punishment to wash out the insult. There's only one thing you can do. Get out of her sight, and find her people."

Dolly listened without a word, though slowly up into his face welled a dull red flush. But he wrenched himself, half sullenly, out of Royal's grasp. Royal let him go. He had conquered. The next few seconds were spent in hasty directions, and then Dolly started.

It was some minutes before Royal could enter the cave again. When he did so, he found Miss Patience Garfield still sitting on the bank of rocks, her face turned to him. It was very white, except two crimson spots burning on either cheek, and her eyes were brilliantly bright. As Royal entered, the colour swept swift and scarlet over her face, staining brow and throat, but her eyes never failed. As he advanced she rose to her feet.

"Is Jeanville anywhere near here?" she asked, her voice still and cold as ice.

"Only a few hours' journey."

"Then I shall be much obliged if you would go there for me. We were going there on our way home. My father has a friend there, and we were to stay a few days with his wife. If you would let them know, they could come and fetch me. I am sorry to give any more trouble. But if you will do this, I shall be much obliged."

Her voice was steady and clear; her language quite dignified.

"Very well," he said.

"I will write Mrs. Maple a line," she said, "and if you would take it at once," her voice was not quite so steady, and the colour began to well up slowly into her face again, but her eyes still met his. "I have left my pocket-book behind; if you would give me a piece of paper"—her voice was growing very unsteady indeed, and the stiff dignity of the erect figure began to tremble a little—"or anything to write on," her voice choked in a very undignified sob—"I would thank you. Oh, how could you—how could you keep me here! It was wicked of you when— Oh, I want to go right away!"

A wild passion of sobbing words swept away the last traces of dignified primness, and the next second Miss Patience Garfield sank down, a poor little crushed heap of sobbing girlhood, on the rocky bank.

The look on that man's debased face, the sneer, of his words, his hateful laugh,

seemed to shut her in, and scorch her like an atmosphere of fire.

Royal stood looking at her. His face grew paler and paler, till it seemed that there was no blood left ever to flush it into crimson life again. Perhaps one life did pass from him then; or at least, it was so weakened, that it made the giving up of the other comparatively easy.

After a little he pulled out a dirty, well-worn note-book. He tore out a sheet of blank paper and laid it down by the girl with a pencil. Then he left the cave. Outside he did several things: he fetched water from the spring which fell down the sides of the ravine, some little distance from the cave, in case she should not have enough till they came for her. He looked to see what food remained. There would be plenty for the rest of the day, and, before the next, help would be there. Then, when he could do nothing else for her, he proceeded to his own private affairs. He opened his note-book again and looked through it, tearing out and carefully destroying most of the notes. A few he left, and on a blank sheet of paper he wrote half-a-dozen lines for Dolly.

Dolly might as well have the benefit of the little belonging to him. When the present affair had blown over, he could claim the property.

When Royal had finished everything to his satisfaction he returned to the cave. Miss Patience Garfield had ended her note, and was sitting waiting for him:

Then the pale gravity of his face lightened, and he addressed her in his usual voice:

"I want you to promise me this before I go: that you will not stir from this place till they come for you—not even to pass outside of the bushes."

She nodded, her voice was not yet to be trusted.

"I would hide you farther in the cliff," he said, with a gesture towards the broken background of rock, "but I am afraid you might lose yourself. You will be safe enough here, I think, if you will keep quiet and wait till I send."

"You will come back too?" she exclaimed hastily, suddenly remembering all that he had done for her.

A curious smile flickered across his face.

"I don't think so," he said; "but you will be all right. You can trust me!" with a touch of anxiety.

"Trust you!" she flushed piteously.

"Oh, I don't wonder at your asking that. I was so ungrateful, so—and you had been so good!"

He drew back hastily.

"No, you needn't be scared," and she tried to laugh, but the effort was not very successful; "I'm not going to cry again. You'll have to come back to see papa; he will be mortal grateful, and—and I'll never forget as long as I live. And if you don't come and see us, I'll go on expecting you till—well, I guess, till I die."

She laughed again; but the sound was so hysterical that it upset herself, and wildly waving her hand for him to go, she turned away.

So he went, and as he went he thought that they had not once shaken hands. He would have liked to have done so; but he could not ask, and, besides, there was no time to waste.

#### CHAPTER V.

It was about eleven when Royal started. It was just upon seven when he reached the outskirts of Jeanville. In a lonely half-made road, skirted by a belt of pines, which shut off as yet the sight of the town, he stopped, hesitating whether he should wait for nightfall to enter. But the remembrance that every hour here meant another hour of torturing loneliness and possible danger to the girl waiting in the cave, induced him to push on. If luck were with him, and with proper precaution, he might enter. Besides, it would be dark before he reached it. The town lay still a mile away. He was footsore and faint; but after another look at his Derringer, he went on down the road, and as he walked his quick, keen eyes kept up their patient watch which nothing could escape. Suddenly he stood still. His ear, trained and delicate as an Indian's, caught a slight rustle in the bushes to his left. Then a figure sprang down from the bank a few yards in front of him, standing out clear in the crimson light.

His hand, with the gleam of the weapon, dropped to his side, and he stood silently looking at the figure. It was a woman, and the crimson light stained her face and made even his look flushed.

It lighted up her tawdry finery, and flashed on the gold in her ears and on her hands. She was handsome, with a certain bold, coarse beauty, and her great dark eyes stared steadily at him as he looked at her.

"Royal!" She spoke first, in rough



though not unpleasant voice. It had even a touch of softness. "What brings you here? The boys are all on the look-out. George has been gone since yesterday after you. He was wild because they wouldn't let him do for you at once."

Royal smiled in mockery.

"I've passed him on the road, then."

The woman laughed.

"Guess he won't expect to see you here, anyway."

Then her face grew grave.

"But, Royal——"

"Good-night, Nan!" he said laconically.

He turned on his heel; then a thought struck him, and he turned back. He pulled out a piece of the paper he had brought, and scribbled something on it. The woman stood by, looking at him with a curious expression in her face. When he had finished, he looked up.

"Nan," he said, laying his hand on her arm, "I believe you are to be trusted. I want you to do me a favour."

The woman nodded, but she still looked at him curiously, and the dark flush that mounted to his pale face seemed to find an odd reflecting shadow in her eyes. She took the paper without a word.

"There's an address on it," he said; "I want it taken to that place—that is, if anything happens to me, you know. I'm going there now; but, if I don't get so far, I want you to go for me; only, whatever you do, don't let George know."

"You bet!"

"Good-bye, Nan!" he said again; and this time he held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Royal," she said, with a self-conscious laugh. "You're a fool to carry that handsome head so close to the boys. Go back where you came from."

He only laughed and turned away.

She stood staring after him as he went. Then she sat down by the roadside and began to cry.

But Royal did not look back. Perhaps, if he had, he might have felt differently. As it was, he was only filled with a bitter, cynical wonder that, for the sake of a brief amusement with a woman such as that, he had played a game of which the stakes were his life.

In a moment of folly, or dulness, or ill-luck—whichever it might be Royal could not have said—he had made himself agreeable to "Beautiful Nan". And George Pelham, who looked upon her as his property, resented his attentions. He had sworn not to rest till he had put a bullet

in his rival. And the woman between them sat crying by the wayside, for Royal's eyes said more, perhaps, than they really meant, and his handsome face would awake chords in women's hearts when he himself was perfectly indifferent to the music he drew. But the women had their revenge now, if they wished for it.

Down the lonely road came sounds of feet and voices. Half-a-dozen miners were making their way out of the town. A bend of the road hid them from view, and Royal, springing into the thick undergrowth, crouched down in hiding. They passed him after a few minutes. They were all men of his acquaintance.

He waited till they were some distance away, but he did not wait long enough. Perhaps he had grown reckless. After hours of ceaseless watching and expectation, men do sometimes. He stepped down into the road, and made for the curve. Once beyond it, he would be out of sight. Just as he reached it, one of the men looked back. As he caught sight of the well-known figure standing out clear for an instant in the red light, an exclamation broke from him. The other men turned and saw, and with a shout they gave chase. Royal heard the shout, and ran. It was not a case for fighting. Down the rough road he flashed, his head up, his feet light and active, as if there had been no heaviness of exhaustion a minute before. He must get into the town, or at least near enough to find another messenger in case Nan failed him.

His splendid training and natural swiftness more than kept up the advantage of his start. The men saw it as they turned the curve, and one, with an oath, fired. The bullet whistled past Royal. The next—for the man's example was followed—grazed his cheek. But still he never stopped, though now the bullets seemed flying all round, and he was struck more than once. But for the moment he was scarcely conscious of them. Something else stronger than physical endurance was carrying him on.

"It is lucky for me. They're all drunk!" he said, with heavy, sobbing breath. "I'll do it yet."

But he had reckoned without his host—otherwise George. There was an old half-ruined shanty standing a little back from the road. A man was lying in it asleep. It was George Pelham. Torn opposite ways between the lust of revenge and the rage of jealousy, the latter had proved the

stronger, and George had returned from tracking his rival to see what Nan herself was about. He was sleeping off the fatigues of his search in the shanty. The sound of firing and the thud of feet awoke him. A row was like the breathing of new life to George. He sprang to his feet and rushed out, to see his rival ten yards past the shanty, running for his life. A deep curse broke from George's lips, while into his eyes leaped the horrible fury of triumphant revenge and hatred.

He lifted his hand, with its weapon covering the figure which was stumbling a little now, as if the way before it was no longer quite clear. George waited for a second till it steadied itself again, then touched the trigger.

There was a quick, sharp report; Royal gave a little bound in the air, ran a few steps, then staggered a step or two forward, then flung up his arms, and fell face downwards in the red earth of the road.

#### CHAPTER VI.

A BEAUTIFUL English garden in July, Sweeps of velvet turf, scarlet patches of blossoms, shade of grand trees, and the old grey house in the midst full of guests, for Lady Samphire's country seat was as popular as her town-house, and to be invited to spend a few days with her, was an honour much esteemed.

This hot July morning all the tennis-courts were vacant with the exception of one, and in this stood a man and a woman talking very earnestly. Now, given a beautiful woman with a fabulous fortune, and every fascination of manner, natural as well as acquired, it is easy enough to guess what the subject of an earnest discussion is, when her companion is a man, unmarried, young enough to be ambitious, and appreciative enough not to lose sight of her beauty in her millions.

The result of the conversation naturally depends on the woman, as it did on Miss Patience Garfield this morning. A few minutes later, the young man walked dejectedly away to hide himself in the trees, and Miss Patience Garfield flitted in her pink tennis-gown back to the grey house. She did not look penitent at all. Indeed, there was a bright light in her eyes, and her cheeks were flushed.

"It is very tiresome that you can't play a set of tennis with a man without his thinking he may propose," she said to herself snappishly.

Now, as these proposals were of such constant occurrence that they had grown part of Miss Garfield's existence, it was a wonder she felt so cross over it. But this morning she felt something as she did in the days when the proposals first began. She felt inclined to cry.

She was passing the morning-room. A glance showed that it was empty. She slipped hastily through the French-windows and darted into the coolest and shadiest corner, seizing a book. She had barely settled down, when the butler opened the door and announced a visitor:

"The Earl of Oldacre."

"Bother!" was Miss Garfield's mental exclamation at the announcement of a strange name. "Lady Samphire is not here," she said hastily, aloud to the butler; "she has just gone down to the farm." Then she caught sight of the man entering. She staggered to her feet and stood staring. The butler drew back and closed the door. The Earl of Oldacre advanced into the room, then stopped and stood staring too. Then Miss Garfield, her face as white as the roses she wore, sank down into her chair trembling in every limb. "Are you a ghost?" she said. "Are you dead or alive? Oh, you were dead! They said so!" and she began to laugh a little wildly.

Lord Oldacre, who seemed to have recovered some of his self-possession, came quickly forward, smiling a little, though his face was as pale as her own.

"I have frightened you," he said. "I wanted to see Lady Samphire first to get her to tell you. I am staying near here, and heard you——"

"But you are Royal, are not you?" She rose to her feet, and looked at him, her eyes still frightened. He was dressed in the faultless dress of an Englishman, yet he wore it with scarcely more grace than the shabby, rough clothes she had first seen him in. "Oh yes, you are Royal!" she said, and she sank down again, apparently forgetting to shake hands. She looked so white and trembling that the man's eyes were full of distress.

"What an unlucky brute I am!" he said hastily.

"No; it doesn't matter at all." She forced herself to sit up and laugh. "Only a foolish woman like me would have fancied she saw a ghost on a hot July morning. No; I was dreadfully foolish. But they said you were dead when we arrived at Jeanville. Sit down there and tell me all about it."

She made an imperious gesture to a chair near.

"There isn't much to tell," he said. But he sat down. As he did so, Miss Garfield's eyes fell on the great ugly scar on his cheek, and she shuddered from head to foot.

"It was horrible!" she said. "You should have told me. How was I to know that I was sending you straight to death!"

"But it wasn't, for I am alive," with a faint smile.

"Don't—don't make me hate myself more than I have done all these years—eight years! And you were alive all the time, and never came back, though I said I should wait. And such lots of things have happened. Papa made a fortune, and we have come to Europe to spend it. Eight years; and I have grown quite old! Do you know, in three more years I shall be thirty! I have no grey hairs yet, nor any wrinkles, but I am growing old for all that, and I was so young when you first met me!" with a touch of pathetic passion. "It was wrong of you. If you were alive, you should have come back. I told you I should expect you."

"I thought you might have forgotten me."

"Forgotten! But I know you always thought badly of me. Oh, I have learned many things since then. I know now what sort of women you meant. I have met them. See, do you think I have succeeded?" She sprang up, and paced up and down the dainty room with a stately grace, holding a palm-leaf in her hand. The man sat watching her. Then she tossed the palm-leaf away, and ran back to her seat with a laugh. "I have tried so hard," she said; "and I don't say 'around' any more, nor 'elegant', and I don't eat with my knife. Didn't I eat with my knife when you saw me?"

Lord Oldacre laughed, but his eyes were a little bewildered.

"No; you did not do that."

She breathed a sigh of relief.

"I did so many things, I thought I might have done that too. How you must have laughed at me!"

"I did not."

"No; you died for me."

"Not even that," he said with a smile, which faded as suddenly as it came.

She looked so beautiful as she sat there in the perfection of her womanhood, with the soft colour coming and going in her face, and her lips tremulous between laughter and something nearer tears.

"You have not told me yet," she said. "Life has been so monotonous for eight years. I want to hear something exciting."

"There is nothing exciting. I don't know very much myself. I believe they took me into the shanty when I was knocked over. I was left there for dead."

"How did the note reach my friends?"

Lord Oldacre flushed darkly.

"I had given it to a messenger," he said.

"Oh!"

Then she was silent, and looked away.

"Some friends found me a little later, and took me away," he went on with a hurried note in his quiet voice. "They gave out I was dead, thinking it safer for me till I was able to get about again and look after myself. That was what you heard, I suppose?"

"Yes," she said; and she sat upright, with a stiffening of all the beautiful lines of her figure.

There was a hardening of her eyes, too.

"My friends found me, and almost as soon my father came. He went down into Jeanville next day, for I was too ill to be moved; then we heard all the story, and that you were dead."

"Who was it who found you?" she asked after a second's pause, during which they had not looked at each other.

"Dolly—Tom Carleton was his real name—and a woman called 'Nan'."

Miss Garfield rose and went over to a bank of ferns, pulling at their fronds with her slender fingers.

"They were very good to me—these friends," he said. "I was ill for weeks after that, unconscious and helpless, and they nursed me through it all, though Dolly was a drunkard, and Nan—well, she was not a woman such as you know."

There was a dead silence.

When she turned her face to him again, it was very pale, but the eyes looked out softly from a mist of tears.

"They were very good, those friends of yours," she said. "What became of them?"

"Dolly was killed in a drunken fray, and Nan—well, she is living still."

Lord Oldacre had risen. He went over to the window and looked out for a few seconds. When he turned again there was a shadow on his face which hushed the last rebellion in her heart.

"Dolly used to be my fag at Eton," he said simply. "I wanted to bring him back with me, but he died. His mother broke

her heart over him. Miss Garfield, will you listen to my story?"

She sat down silently.

"You ought to know it, for if there is anything saved from the wreck it is your doing. That day I met you made a difference. Somehow you brought back all the life I had lost. You made me remember the women I had known. When I got better I cut the old ways and tried to live differently. Then three years ago I came into the title. My two elder brothers had died. But perhaps you have already heard my history—it was common property!" with a little bitter sarcasm.

"I have done a great deal," she said, with a laugh which was not very successful, "but I have not yet mastered the private histories of the English peerage."

He laughed faintly.

"Mine is not a very edifying one, at any rate. When I was a youngster I was in the Blues. I was a younger son, and I gambled, and betted, and disgraced myself generally. I was kicked out of the service, and had to disappear. When I came into the title I was ashamed to come back. But I was persuaded to come and live the past down."

"And you have."

It was more an affirmation than an enquiry.

"I don't know; I am the Earl of Old-acre, and people are civil to me," with intense bitterness.

He went over to the window again, and stood there looking out.

Miss Garfield sat watching him.

"Do you know what to-day is?" she asked abruptly; "it is the 13th of July. Eight years to-day since you saved my life. How worthless you must have thought it when you would not even come back to let me have the satisfaction of thanking you for it."

"Worthless!" He turned sharply

round, and the next minute he was at her side. "It was because it was something so beautiful to me that I dared not come."

He stopped abruptly, turning white, and trembling suddenly from head to foot.

"Royal—Royal!" she cried quickly, rising to her feet; and then she began to cry.

"What is it? Have I hurt you again? Don't, for Heaven's sake, Miss Garfield!"

He stepped back, speaking hoarsely.

"It's no good!" She lifted her head.

"You are so blind!" with a laugh ending in a sob. "You mended my foot—you saved my life; and then—and then——"

"What?" He drew quite close to her.

"I love you—I love you! Oh, Patience, what were you going to say? You know nothing of me. I might be——"

"No; I know nothing of you, except that you went to die for me, and—— it is dreadfully silly, I know, but I've waited for you ever since, though I thought I was waiting for a ghost."

Miss Patience had only a very confused sense of where she ended her sentence. Only it seemed as if suddenly all peace had fallen upon her, and that she lay hushed and quiet in a perfect resting-place.

She was very silent for a few moments, then she lifted her head again.

"I want to say something very badly, and yet I am afraid. That other, she saved your life, and I——"

"Patience!" There was a sharp note of pain in his voice. "Has not my punishment been great enough? It was she, and the life she represented, which kept me apart from you all these years. I dared not come and find you."

"Poor Nan!" and the voice was so pitiful, and the eyes so sorry and yet so wondrously beautiful, with their tender light of love, that Royal—remembering the past—with a sound like a sob in his throat, caught her to him again.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

AN UNCONVENTIONAL

## ALMANACK FOR 1887,

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

### In Beauty's Cause; or, The Quest of a Year.

PRICE  
6d.

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#### CALENDAR FOR 1887.

### IN BEAUTY'S CAUSE;

OR,

### THE QUEST OF A YEAR.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE ADMIRAL'S HOME, CORNWALL.

THE almanack had it that the month was September, but the woods and fields would have said July, for there was no tinge of autumnal decay anywhere to be seen. A moist and sunless summer had left some compensation in the richness of the foliage and the luxuriance of vegetation, and a few warm, halcyon days with glorious sunshine and a soft whispering breeze made life once more worth living.

Such, anyhow, was the state of affairs at Polpernac, a village not far from the extreme cape of Cornwall, placed in a rocky ravine which sheltered it from the rough Atlantic gales. At the head of the little dell above the village stood Polpernac House with its grounds sloping to the river, so-called, which was little more than a brook, with a margin of rich feathery growth, among which were conspicuous in bounteous profusion the tasselled fronds of the royal fern. In another half-mile the brook had merged into a deep tidal creek where fishermen's cobbles were moored and an occasional trading brig found a haven.

From the margin of the brook velvet lawns led upwards to an old-world terrace

with carved balusters and white classic urns peeping from a rich growth of flowering shrubs and climbing plants. The house above seemed rather itself a growth than the mere creation of architects and builders. The main stem was a quaint but restricted Tudor manor house, from which had branched out here a handsome saloon and conservatories flashing back the sunlight, there a kind of kiosk with a lofty tower and tall flagstaff. Then another offshoot formed a billiard-room and smoking-room, and this was connected with the rest by a terrace and quaint oriental gallery, almost overgrown by palms and semi-tropical plants.

Within, the furniture and adornments offered the same contrasted but pleasant confusion. Old Gothic buffets, spider-legged tables, cabinets of Queen Anne's date, high-backed chairs, and comfortable modern couches were mingled with French marqueterie, inlaid Indian coffers, and old Japanese enamels. Chinese monsters grinned from behind screens of delicate Peruvian matting, and the thick white fur of the polar bear was contrasted with the rich spoils of the burning tropics.

But Polpernac was not the museum of a collector of curiosities; it had collected for itself. The spoils of generations had accumulated under its ever-widening roof-tree. Adventurers had explored new countries; soldiers had fought on far-away

fields, and had plundered a little no doubt from the enemy; sailors had ransacked strange heathen temples, and had made free with idols and graven images—and all with Polpernac in their minds, and thinking the pleasant Cornish home the fittest receptacle for their treasures.

There was an old saying in the country that Polpernac possessed everything in the world except a child—a saying wonderfully borne out in the history of the old house. No child had ever been born at Polpernac, nor ever would be, said the old wisacres; and these were not likely to be put to shame by the present occupiers of the house—one Admiral Langford and his middle-aged maiden sister. Yet there was a young girl in the house who called them aunt and uncle; but the relationship was only by adoption, and Ethel Langford—more generally known as Beauty—had no hereditary right to the name she bore.

In this pleasant autumn weather, in which there is no touch of bitterness, the dwellers at Polpernac House are mostly encamped upon the lawn before the open windows of the saloon. The letter bag has just arrived—it turns up about luncheon time in those out-of-the-way latitudes—and while the Admiral is frowning and knitting his brows over his despatches, his sister is smiling and sighing as she reads a long letter from a friend of early days. The parson of St. Kylene, which is the church town for Polpernac, makes a third on the lawn; and as he has no letters to read he is occupying himself with a book—no novel or frothy trifle appropriate to the scene, but a meanly-bound vocabulary of the Zulu language.

"Listen, William," cried Miss Langford to her brother, "listen to what your old friend Beatrice Vavasor writes: 'There is one thing you have not got at Polpernac, despite the adage, with which we are now supplied at Coningsberg. What do you say to a human head, Walter's last consignment, a horrible-looking head from Borneo? So, you see, Walter must be on his way home at last. The servants are frightened out of their wits, and declare that they hear the head talking to itself at night in a strange tongue.'"

"Come, that's a point of interest," said Mr. Seabright, the parson of St. Kylene. "If these servants now could give us the sounds of the words they heard we might tell what family of language the sounds belonged to. Who knows, it might throw some light on Beauty's early vocabulary."

Miss Langford shook her head. "I am afraid that is a mystery that is insoluble now. Poor Ethel must remain with the stigma."

"Nonsense!" interrupted the Admiral, angrily, "what stigma is there? What does it matter about the girl's origin if she is good and clever and handsome, as nobody can dispute our Beauty to be. Do you know, Dorothy, there is something about her that often reminds me of Beatrice Vavasor herself."

"I have a great curiosity to know something more about Miss Vavasor," said Mr. Seabright, "and this absentee brother—what an eccentric character he must be!"

"Eccentric, indeed!" replied Miss Langford; "do you know we were beginning to think that Walter Vavasor had disappeared from the world altogether—twenty years absent from his own beautiful home. Coningsberg is, I assure you, a charming, even princely residence, and for fifteen years at least no one, except his sister Beatrice, who manages everything in his absence, has heard a word from him."

"I have heard people talk about Miss Vavasor," said the parson; "one of your stern and masculine females, who is seen at every racecourse; a pale, weary face, an Amazonian costume, a race-glass slung over her shoulders, a betting-book in her hand. She leans over the balcony of the enclosure, and with a nod of her head a dozen pencils are at work among the excited bookmakers, who struggle to catch her eye. All the while she wears an expression of indifference and even disdain. I have heard it said that she abhors races, and yet she keeps up the stud and runs her horses—as Mr. William Sykes—just to keep up the honour of the house of Vavasor. And the same with the hounds. I am told she keeps up the pack and hunts three days a week in the season, always with the same weary, disdainful air."

"Yes, that is Beatrice," said Miss Langford, nodding her head approvingly at the description. "A noble-hearted woman too; but I must not sing her praises before the Admiral, who is strangely prejudiced against her."

"I—no!" cried the Admiral, looking confused, "I have no prejudice against her; I have a great objection to meeting her, for she recalls painful memories. But that is all; I rather admire her."

"Hush, Admiral!" said Miss Langford, "here comes Ethel herself and our foreign guests."

## CHAPTER II. FOREIGN GUESTS.

MISS LANGFORD gave the parson a warning look, for Ethel was already within earshot. At a glance it might be seen that there was no family resemblance between Beauty and her guardians. These latter were of the blonde and florid English type. Ethel was dark and cherie-looking, with great languid eyes, and complexion brown and warm. There was more likeness between herself and her companion, Madame Bertrand—a pretty and animated Frenchwoman—who was an old schoolfellow of Ethel's and a guest at Polpernac.

"Our letters have just arrived," cried Miss Langford, "and here are two for the General and three for Madame Bertrand."

The General, a tall, elderly man, with a large grey moustache, advanced to receive his letters with a kind of military precision, and with profuse apologies retired to discuss their contents. Madame Bertrand trifled with her letters, looked at the seals and addresses, and dropped them into her pocket.

"And no letters for me!" cried Ethel, looking round; "that is a shame."

But the Admiral beckoned her to his side.

"There is one left in Pandora's box, my dear," he whispered, slipping a letter into her hand; "I recognised the handwriting, and would not make it public property. Take it away and read it under the trees."

Ethel, too, seemed to recognise the handwriting, for her countenance took a sudden glow which warmed her face into beauty, and with a grateful glance towards the Admiral she retired into the shade.

Presently General Bertrand returned with a shadow of vexation on his face.

"Alas!" he said, addressing Miss Langford, "I have received my letter of recall. I am summoned to resume my command."

"Oh, what sad news!" cried Miss Langford, "you must really leave us? But your wife—must she go too?"

The General said that he should be happy to leave his wife in Miss Langford's kind charge for a few days if permitted. He must take his leave at once, for he had not a moment to spare, but he trusted that his hosts of to-day would be his guests of to-morrow, and Madame Bertrand gracefully seconded his entreaties.

"You are too kind," replied Miss Langford politely. "For my own part, I am too

firmly rooted here. But the Admiral and Ethel must answer for themselves."

"I shall be charmed, dear Helen," cried Ethel, who had now rejoined the party. "If only our dear Admiral will consent to bring me. Where is he?—Playing billiards with St. Kyloe, I guess."

"Let us find him, and make him promise to come," cried Madame Bertrand. "Adieu, mon brave," she cried, waving her hand to the General. "You shall have a week's liberty, and then you may expect me, and, I hope, my friends."

The General had taken his leave, and driven away, and the young people were at tennis on the lawn, when Miss Langford retired to her own sitting-room for repose. She rang the bell for her maid.

"What a mercy!" as Bridget appeared in answer to the summons. "One is gone, and the other is going, Bridget."

"Well, that is a mercy, Miss, as you say. And the Count, too, is he going?"

"Depend upon it, Bridget, he won't stay long after her. But the worst of it is the artful creature is trying to persuade the Admiral to go and visit her and take Miss Ethel."

"Dear me!" cried Bridget, looking quite scared. "How wonderful that do agree with what old Dolly Penteasel was saying only just now! And that reminds me, Miss, that Mrs. Penteasel do want powerful to see you. She says there has been awful crying and lamenting in Kyloe these last three nights, and she fears that there be something that threatens Miss Ethel."

"She knows it, my dear, good lady, she knows it," cried Dolly Penteasel herself, who, finding the coast clear, had slipped in from the servants' hail. "That poor, dear lady doesn't cry from the depths of the sea for nothing. La, my dear! it do be heartrending to hear her."

"Oh, Dolly!" cried Miss Langford feebly. "We can't believe that such things are permitted."

"Ho! What!" cried Dolly, much excited. "Did you ever know Dolly Penteasel deceive you? Do you think a mother is not permitted to cry for her child? What was it when the poor little maid was near death's door with scarlet fever? What was it when she was out in the tempest with my Lord Admiral and nearly lost? Didn't I tell you how the poor lady cried for her child? But she never cried so sorely as she does now. Keep your eyes upon her, dear lady; keep

your eyes upon Miss Beauty. She came with the wind, and who knows but she'll go with the wind. But, whatever you do, keep her clear of that foreign Count. He is as cruel as the wind and as deep as the blue sea."

But to understand what Dolly Pentecost meant by her warnings it will be necessary to tell the story of the wreck.

#### CHAPTER III. STORY OF THE WRECK.

POLPERNAC HOUSE is a short mile from the fishing village of the same name. But there is a shorter way to reach the sea—a footpath which leads to the verge of the cliffs, and then descends precipitously into Kylloe Cove, a narrow ravine hemmed in by masses of rock of every form and colour. The floor of the cove is of pure white sand studded with jagged tooth-like crags. But the sand is only accessible at low water. At high tides and in stormy weather the waves dashed through the cove and rose in showers of spray far above the summit of the cliff. Even when the weather on shore was calm, a strong ground-swell would often set in, and the uneasy roaring and bellowing of the waves, as they dashed among rocks and caverns, had a strange, uncanny effect in the stillness of summer weather; and the sounds were regarded by the fishermen as foretelling storms and shipwrecks to come.

Some way distant from the mouth of the cove rises, in the midst of the waters of the bay, a detached pillar of rock known as Kylloe Beak, accessible only at low tide, and then with considerable danger. Once upon a time rare plants, that grew in its crevices, tempted wandering naturalists to make the attempt to reach it. But the naturalists had extirpated the rare plants, and now there was nothing to induce people to visit Kylloe Beak, and there was nothing to be seen or done when the feat was accomplished.

About fifteen years ago the Beak had been the scene of a disastrous shipwreck. One stormy night an unknown vessel had been driven into the bay. Her lights were seen from the shore; her signals of distress were observed, but before the lifeboat from Penzance, the nearest station on the coast, could be brought round, the ship had struck against Kylloe Beak and gone to pieces.

Some few had watched in helpless pity the sad catastrophe from the heights; there was indeed little to be seen through the

driving sea-drift, nothing to be heard but the roaring and the driving of the wind, but the ship's lights gleamed for a moment in the dark mass of rock and then were extinguished in night; while even above the roar of the tempest was heard the last despairing cry of those who were thus suddenly engulfed in the cruel sea. Among the watchers was Captain Langford of Polpernac House, who had gathered together a handful of men and supplied them with ropes and spars, expecting that the ship would be driven ashore, where it might be possible to save some of her crew. But when the vessel struck on Kylloe Beak, it was evident that all aid was hopeless. If any swam through the raging sea they must be dashed to pieces among the rocks. Still the Captain watched and waited, his heart saddened with the thought of the lives that had been lost, without a chance of aid, when suddenly in a momentary lull of the tempest, above the loud roar of the breaking waves, he heard a shrill and human cry. Not from the open sea, but from the depths of Kylloe Cove came the wild, despairing cry. Some poor wretch, perhaps, had been carried there by the waves, and was perishing in that seething cauldron. None but he had heard the cry, and it was with difficulty that he could persuade two or three fishermen to accompany him some way down the cove. For among the fishermen Kylloe Cove had an ill reputation, and the cries that, as people would sometimes have it, rose from its depths, were but the mocking call of some evil spirit of the waters, tempting men to their destruction.

Halfway down the steep, where the salt spray rose like a cloud, and the white surf, touched by a friendly streak of moonlight, shed a lurid kind of light in the blackness of the chasm, a projecting rock jutted out, like the arm of some gigantic derrick, right over the confused mass of waters. Along this rock the Captain crawled on hands and knees till he could peer over the edge into the depths below. Waiting patiently till his eyes were accustomed to the strange, murky glare, he recognised at last that some fragment of wreck—a portion of a mast with the cross-trees, and a tangle of rigging about it—was actually tossing about below, sometimes overwhelmed with surf, sometimes rising streaming out of the waters. Some dark object, too, he thought, was clinging to the floating mass; but of this he could hardly satisfy himself till, in a sudden ray of moonlight as quickly



eclipsed, he caught sight of what was undoubtedly the wan face of a woman, whose dark hair was lashed about by the wind and waves.

The Captain returned quickly from his perch to where his companions stood closely huddled together, and taking the end of a rope knotted it firmly beneath his shoulders, motioning to the fishermen to pay it out. The men, seeing that his purpose was to descend into the chasm, by signs and gestures endeavoured to dissuade him, pointing out that with such uncertain footholds, if he should fall, they would be dragged down after him. "Very well, then, I will go without the rope," the Captain seemed to say, as he was about to cast it from him. But at this moment a firm hand was laid approvingly on his shoulder. It was the parson of St. Kyloe who had arrived on the scene, providentially armed with a crowbar, which, firmly planted in a rocky crevice, at once afforded a satisfactory point d'appui. And the arrival of the parson reinforced not only physical appliances, but moral courage. If there were an evil spirit in the case, the parson was at hand to exorcise it.

"Say a prayer over un, parson," cried a grizzled fisherman, as the Captain's form was lost to sight in the gloom, and the parson's lips moved as foot by foot the rope was paid out by those who knew that a valued life hung on the balance of a hair. With touches as light as the hand of a practised rider upon the rein, and yet with sinews braced to receive the shock of any sudden downfall, the men now let out the rope inch by inch, reassured now and then by a gentle thrill, that meant "all right;" their hearts and thoughts concentrated on that one purpose. A strange group in the fitful moonlight—the grizzled head, with hair and beard streaming in the wind, the soft brown face and curly hair, of almost womanly softness; the red locks and wild visage of a son of the Gael, and the parson with his cassock kilted up about his loins, and his cropped head and closely-shaven face.

An impatient twitch of the rope bade them lower faster. "Pray for un again, parson," cried the greybeard. Then the rope hung slack, and thus remained for some minutes. Those above had almost come to despair of the Captain's safety, when three successive twitches at the rope gave the signal to haul up. Softly and carefully they pulled, feeling little strain on the rope. The Captain's perilous de-

scent had evidently been fruitless. He was now rapidly ascending, and then the men hauled in hand over hand. Next moment the Captain was among them, and bearing some tiny object in his arms; it was a little child, whose white deathly face hung over his shoulder.

The parson stretched out his arms to relieve his friend of his burden, but the Captain shook his head, and with the child pressed closely to his breast, he climbed the footpath rapidly, and then with a gesture that indicated there was no more to be done, made for his own house. The rest followed him at a slower pace.

The lights of Polpernac House gleamed cheerfully through the haze, and the fishermen, wet and weary, were glad to rest themselves by the great glowing kitchen fire and refresh themselves with the Captain's strong ale, as they discussed the events of the night. The parson waited in the library, where he was soon joined by Captain Langford. "The child lives," he cried, seizing the parson by the hand, his voice choked by emotion. "She is mine, Seabrook! Her mother gave her to me. Good Heavens, I could have saved her too, I almost touched her; she had only to stretch out her arms, but she thrust the child into my arms and then sank back without an effort to escape, and next moment the sea swallowed her up fathoms deep."

It was strange enough and yet delightful too, to see a little child darting about the solemn old garden of Polpernac, and to hear her making the grey walls echo with laughter. There had not been a baby at Polpernac since Heaven knew when. The reigning dynasty at the Hall had always seemed to delegate the perpetuation of the succession to other branches of the family. Captain Langford had succeeded his uncle, who had himself inherited from a far-off cousin, and it seemed as if the fates had ordained a celibate life for the present occupiers of the Hall. Captain Langford and his sister Dorothy were both unmarried, and likely to remain so. Report had it they both had been disappointed in love.

And the little sprite who had thus suddenly appeared on the scene found the house of life swept and garnished for her reception. Evidently the child had been a spoilt and much-prized darling of somebody's heart; and she took the lead and command at Polpernac without the slightest hesitation. Captain Langford, in theory, was a rigid disciplinarian, but all his

theories yielded to the touch of those tiny hands. Some instinctive sense of his having brought her to life out of the jaws of death, seemed to move the child to a wonderful confidence and trust in the somewhat stern and time-worn commander, while on his part the same feeling gave occasion to affection of a character that was almost fiercely paternal.

In time Captain Langford came to dread the possibility of anyone coming forward to claim the custody of the child on the score of relationship. It seemed strange, indeed, that no enquiries had been made as to the shipwrecked vessel and its lost crew. Mr. Seabright, the parson of St. Kyloe, the same who had taken part in the rescue, had thought it his duty to make such enquiries as were in his power, but these were entirely without result. No ship answering to the wrecked vessel was reported as missing. Lloyd's agency knew nothing about the wreck.

Another strange circumstance was that the language of the little stranger was an entirely unknown tongue. She spoke a little French as well as English indeed, curiously mixed and pieced; but the speech she was most at home with, liquid, soft, and musical, could not be interpreted by anyone. The parson, himself reputed of vast linguistic attainments, was completely puzzled. He endeavoured to compile a vocabulary of the child's sayings, but before he had made much progress in his task the child had forgotten her foreign lingo, or at all events could not be induced to speak it any more. As to the name of the little sprite, there was at first considerable discussion. She called herself Beauty; but Miss Langford would not hear of that for a Christian name, and suggested Ethel, a name that suggests certain tender associations to Captain (now Admiral) Langford.

A question often exercised the mind of Miss Langford: what was to become eventually of Polpernac, its beauties and its treasures? The Admiral had made no will; intended to make none as long as his sister lived. She had the right to succeed him if she survived, that was plain enough to the Admiral's mind, and he would not limit her rights in any way. At the same time she knew that his anxious wish was that Ethel should be the eventual heiress. But Miss Langford could not be brought to see the justice of this. The Langfords had originally inherited the estate through a daughter of the old house of Tregoes, which had once possessed

Polpernac and much adjoining territory, and there was in existence the scion of an earlier offshoot of the family tree, a veritable Tregoes, a small squire of the neighbourhood. And Miss Langford had decided in her own mind that if the matter were left to her, she should feel it her duty to leave Polpernac to him whom she considered the rightful heir. Everything that she had of her own might go to Ethel, but not this beautiful Polpernac, which she considered to be a trust handed down from former generations who ought to have the greatest voice in the matter. She had consulted the family portraits that hung in the oak-panelled hall, and in the gloomy state dining-room that was lined with teak from the Spanish main, and they all frowned, so it seemed to her, at the mention of nameless Ethel, and smiled approvingly at the name of Laurence Tregoes.

At the same time it struck Miss Langford that it would be a happy thing if Laurence and Ethel would take a fancy to each other and thus unite all interests.

Miss Langford never explicitly declared her mind to Laurence Tregoes, but she had encouraged his visits. She always took his part when he was assailed by the railery of her brother or Ethel.

#### CHAPTER IV. THE COUNT'S INVITATION.

LAURENCE TREGOES had his own little estate and manor-house on the hillside, about two miles from Polpernac. The house was called Treforeign, and had at one time been of superior importance to its neighbour; but while Polpernac had expanded Treforeign had gone somewhat to decay, and the present residence was only a remaining wing of the once lordly dwelling. Still it was a comfortable dwelling, and the estate furnished a comfortable income for a bachelor, although young Tregoes used to frequently curse his hard fate and narrow means. He had all the inclination in the world for society and display, but a cautious temperament kept him from any ruinous extravagance.

At the present moment the Count de St. Croix is a guest at Treforeign. Laurence made his acquaintance accidentally at the hotel in the neighbouring town. A fine old soldier, General Bertrand, his young wife, and their friend and connection, the Count, were paying a visit to the land of romance and mystery, of giants and heroes. They were enquiring for a family of the

name of Langford, a young member of which had been an intimate friend of Madame Bertrand, at the convent where she was educated. Here was an introduction ready made. Tregoes was delighted to be the guide of his new friends to Polpernac, and while the General and his wife accepted a cordial invitation from the Langfords, Laurence secured the Count, who was quite a godsend to the young man in his enforced dulness. The Count knew everybody, and had been everywhere; he could retail you the most intimate relation of princes and princesses; he was equally at home on the turf, and knew the secret history of all the great coups of recent times. His experiences extended a great way back, for he never concealed that he was middle-aged; but he was so gay and vivacious, so active and skilful in all athletic and other sports, that he gave everyone the impression of youth and vigour.

On this particular morning Laurence and his guest were discussing a late but substantial breakfast. There had been a bachelors' party at Treforeign the night before, with a little friendly gambling—first baccarat and then hazard—and the party had broken up just as daylight appeared, many of the guests having long distances to drive over awkward roads, so that the not going home till morning was an affair of only common prudence. Tregoes had lost rather heavily, and the Count had won, a difference in fortune which the latter was determined should not disturb their friendship.

"But what does it matter between friends?" said the Count gaily as Tregoes rather ruefully produced his cheque-book, wondering at the time how the manager of the Penruddock Bank would like the look of his draft. "Pass me thy little I.O.U., Laurence, and next time we play I may have the pleasure of returning it."

This was an arrangement that suited Laurence extremely well, and he went to breakfast with a better appetite than he had previously felt.

"It would be a lovely morning for a sail," said Tregoes, looking up from the breakfast-table at the blue sky and the white clouds sailing quietly aloft. "I wonder if the Langfords are going out. Here, Tom," to a lad who was helping the old man-servant to wait at table, "Tom, run down with my compliments to the Admiral, and are they going out in the yacht to-day?"

"You are on charming terms of friend-

ship with that pleasant household," suggested the Count. "Matters arrange themselves, I suppose. The Admiral is naturally attentive to his future son-in-law, or rather nephew-in-law."

Laurence simpered and caressed his moustache. "I say, though," he exclaimed, "you seem to take it rather easily; I thought you were rather hit there yourself."

"I admire Miss Beauty very much," said the Count gravely, "but, alas! I can never be a pretendant. I am poor, and it behoofs me to marry riches."

"Hang it all, so it does me," cried Tregoes. "There it is. Beauty might be the heiress of Polpernac, and that is a very nice estate."

"Or she might not," suggested the Count. "Ay, there's the rub. Well, my friend, let us work as comrades, as friends—not as rivals. Listen, I will confide to you a secret. I love already hopelessly, unfathomably. You can guess perhaps—the wife of my best friend; of one who has been almost a father to me."

"But there is danger there, surely."

"The affair bristles with dangers. In fine, I see only one ending. On some day—it may be a year hence, it may be two years—I shall stand before the pistol or the sword of my injured friend. For worlds I would not harm one of his grey hairs. But he would be inexorable. I shall receive his bullet or his sword in my breast, and expiate with my life the wrong I have done him."

"But look here," said Tregoes, who did not seem to think the prospect a comfortable one, "if he has grey hairs he is old and may soon die, and in that case you may be happy yet."

"I can't contemplate such a possibility," said the Count frigidly. "Why, it is almost murder that you suggest."

"I only said it was possible," urged Tregoes penitently.

"Tregoes," said the Count solemnly, "the calm and easy manner in which you suggest the removal of a fellow-creature reminds me of nothing so much as an Italian fellow I knew who was an adept at such removals. He told me a story once that made my flesh creep about an exploit of his in that way. One day I'll tell it you.\* It may give you a hint. Now I tell you frankly who is in your way. It is

\* The Count forgot his promise, but we are able to supply the omission. See "The Count's Story," page 34.

a youth named Donald. He is on his way home from India. Miss Beauty has received a letter from him. When he arrives they will be affianced. Then good-bye Polpernac."

Tregoes ground his teeth with rage. He saw that the Count was well informed. He had always mistrusted Donald. But how prevent it? he asked of the Count in despair.

"Well, I do not recommend the Italian method," said the Count, showing his white teeth. "But if we could prevent their meeting—in this way perhaps. My cousin Helen is urging her friend to return with her to Bellefoud. You must come, too; and away from the influence of this young soldier you will have all the field to yourself."

"It is very kind of you," said Tregoes, "to think of me."

At this moment the report of a gun came echoing up the valley, reverberating thunderously from the rocks behind Treforeign. "That is the Admiral's signal-gun," cried Tregoes. "Come along, we can see the flagstaff from the terrace."

Treforeign indeed looked down upon Polpernac, whose roofs and chimneys could be seen rising from the luxuriant foliage. The flagstaff, too, with its fluttering signal-flags, could be clearly made out against the dark woodland masses on the hill beyond. Laurence read the signal easily enough, without the aid of book, and then turned his eyes towards the bay which lay stretched below, dimpling with the wind and changing its hues as shadow or sunshine swept over it. The yacht had answered the signal from the house with naval smartness, and already a boat was manned and was making for the creek.

"We must hurry down," cried Tregoes, "or else we shall be left behind."

As the pair walked quickly down the hill, the view soon opened out, of Polpernac Creek, with the rude cabins of the fisherfolk perched here and there on nooks and corners of the dark and rugged rocks. The village was all in pleasant commotion, cries and shouts echoing from rock to rock, as the whole male population of the village turned out for their boats. The hewer, on heights above, had signalled the approach of a shoal of pilchards, and in a few moments every boat was manned, and the whole fleet was racing for the lead across the bay. When these were out of sight the measured thud of the oars of the yacht's boat was heard, and she presently

showed her nose round the projecting rock that divided the mouth of the creek into two channels. Then, in the other direction, appeared the party from Polpernac, about whom the fishers' wives and daughters formed a hedge as they entered into animated accounts of the arrival of the pilchard for the season and the sudden departure of husbands and sweethearts. Then came a whole batch of servants, chiefly maids, each with some pretence of carrying something, in the way of a shawl, a rug, or basket, to justify her presence. The trim maids, with their white caps and smart dresses, compared with the brown, dishevelled fisher-girls, seemed like the tame and wild varieties of the species; but they were all sisters and cousins, and lively greetings were exchanged among them all along the line. A couple of liver-and-white Newfoundland dogs frisked about among the crowd, barking, delighted at the prospect of a cruise; while from every coign of vantage among the rocks humbler members of the canine tribe added their voices to the general hubbub.

The Admiral had been in a fidget all the morning; not that this occasioned surprise, for such was his usual habit. Now he was on the terrace, with an eye to the dog-vane on the tower; now he consulted the barometer, or scanned the aspect of the heavens with critical eye. And Wilkins, his own man, who had served him for many years, both afloat and ashore, was kept constantly on the move between the Hall and the little post-office, to see if any telegram arrived for the Admiral. The secret of all this was that the "Northfleet" was expected hourly to pass the Lizard, on her voyage home from India, with the Royal Borderers on board, in which regiment Donald Graham was Lieutenant; and the Admiral had made up his mind to intercept her and bring him on shore. He knew there would be no difficulty with the Colonel of the regiment, who was an old friend; and the Captain of the "Northfleet" was not likely to make a fuss about a few minutes', or even half-an-hour's detention. For the Admiral, with his usual impetuosity, had made up his mind that, if Ethel and Donald were to be engaged lovers, the matter had better be settled at once. Donald had written to Ethel; the letter that the Admiral had left in the letter-bag was in his handwriting. But what Ethel's reply would be depended perhaps very much on the events of the next twenty-four hours. Just now



she was moved, excited; and the sight of Donald coming home bronzed and medalled from the wars would surely decide her at once in his favour. The two had been boy and girl together; and possibly this early familiarity was not altogether a favourable element; for Ethel's recollection of him was as a favoured playmate only, and something strange, unaccustomed, foreign, rather captivates a girl's fancy than the familiar figures of her youth. And this Count who had so inopportunistically made his appearance, had possibly, with his practised and yet polished gallantry, rather touched the girl's imagination.

Just at this point in the Admiral's meditations they were interrupted by Wilkins with a despatch. It was from the signal officer of the Lizard, who telegraphed: "Northfleet off the Head with Northumbrians on board."

Evidently there was not a moment to lose, and so Wilkins rushed off to fire the gun and make signals to the yacht to send a boat on shore and make ready to sail. It was the gun which did the mischief, and brought the Count and Tregoes upon the scene.

The whole party were soon on board, and presently the yacht was running with a fresh and westerly breeze for the open sea, the line of rocky coast dwindling in the distance, while the deep blue of the sky and the silvery white of the fleecy clouds were repeated in the blue sea and crisp-white surf. The Atalanta's foaming track sparkled and effervesced like so much champagne, while dolphins gambolled in her path, and great sea monsters threw themselves head and tail in the air in pure freshness of spirits and fulness of life. Here and there a graceful ship with a cloud of canvas spread was hastening up the Channel, while the leading steamers looked less gaunt and stiff than ordinary, as they worked along with their triangular try-sails, all bellied out by the breeze; and, indeed, they might have been taken for gigantic proas or war-canoes, on some head-hunting expedition.

The Count seemed to be an excellent sailor, and he stood gaily talking with Ethel on the quarter-deck, while poor Madame Bertrand was driven to seek the shelter of the cabin. As the two went on talking the conversation became more and more confidential.

"It is strange," said the Count, "but I have wondered much how it was that your face and form seemed so familiar to me.

Now I recall the ideal image of my boyhood, the portrait of a fair and sympathetic creature, whose eyes seemed to follow me always with a strange, sad expression of pity and yearning affection. This was my boyish fancy, remember. The picture still hangs in the old château that calls me master. Alas, I never now care to meet its soft yet penetrating glance!"

"You think that I resemble one of your family," cried Ethel, strangely interested and moved.

"The resemblance is too striking to be accidental; let me hope that before long I may have the pleasure of comparing the painted counterfeit with Nature's fairer handiwork. In plainer language, but not more sincere, I hope you will come and see my dilapidated Château when you visit the modern elegancies of Bellefoud."

"Our visit is not at all settled yet," replied Ethel, "I want to go very much, but——"

"Oh, it must and shall be," said the Count, "I have so strongly willed it."

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE SOLDIER FROM INDIA.

IF the Admiral had planned an elaborate system of defence against any intimacy between Ethel and the Count, here were his earthworks stormed, the very citadel carried by assault. Already the slight mistrust that the Count had inspired was replaced by confidence. An intimate conversation was going on between the pair, in which Ethel was so engrossed that she bestowed but little attention on what was passing around her. Madame Bertrand, who had now come on deck, seemed to regard their tête-à-tête with mistrust. While talking quietly enough with her host and Mr. Seabright, she grew suddenly distraite; her eyes wandered to where the Count was with Ethel; she bit her lip; her eyes sparkled with anger. She made some pretext to speak to Ethel and interrupt the conversation. Ethel was evidently annoyed, and spoke to her friend in freezing monosyllables.

"Now what has that fellow got in his head, pray?" said the parson to his friend in an undertone, indicating the Count.

"I don't care what he has got in his head," said the Admiral; "I have something in mine that will checkmate him. In half-an-hour, my boy, we shall have Donald Graham on board us, and then if Ethel

has as much as a look for the Count, I'm a Dutchman."

"Large steamer coming up fast on the port-bow," sang out the look-out man.

"That's she," cried the Admiral, after a glance through his binoculars, "that's the Northfleet. Now, Mr. Pentaseel, I'll trouble you to fire again and hoist the signal, 'lay to for a boat.'"

There was a little bustle on board the yacht, and presently bang went the little brass carronade, and a string of signal flags were fluttering from the mast-head.

"Donald will be looking out for us," whispered the Admiral to the parson; "what a surprise it will be for them!"

But the steamer came on at full speed without, as it seemed, taking any notice of the signals from the yacht, and yet they had been seen after all, for a flag was run up to the mast-head.

"What do you make of it?" asked the Admiral, rubbing his glasses as if he thought they had played him false.

"It's plain enough, Admiral," said the Captain, "it's the yaller flag. They've got some kind of plague or pestilence on board."

The steamer, as she passed away, with her trail of black smoke and white, sparkling foam, seemed to have drawn with her all the brightness and beauty of the day. A gloomy haze drew rapidly over the sky, and the wind freshened into squalls, with occasional driving showers, and wind and tide were setting strongly up Channel, with a strong rolling swell from the Atlantic. The yacht had already run far to the eastward to intercept the transport, and a long and troublesome beat against wind and sea was in prospect if the "Atalanta's" course were laid for Polpernac. And then the Admiral had no mind to return home, his purpose unaccomplished; and the prospect of a run up the Channel, with such a breeze and such a tide, was quite exhilarating.

Already the quick roll of the yacht, as the sea rose, had begun to produce its effect. Madame Bertrand looked pale and worn; the Count was preternaturally silent and grave, and seemed to have become older within the last few minutes. There was a general acclamation of approval as the Admiral announced that he had decided to run for Plymouth. And, as her huge sails were spread like wings before the breeze, and the yacht dashed onwards in her sparkling course, she seemed to leave the bad weather behind her, and gleams of sun-

shine broke through the dark array of clouds, lighting up sea and coast, the foaming waves, the dark cliffs, and the stern and melancholy hills. Like a white rod against the dusky horizon rose the Eddystone on its lonely rock, and headland stretched beyond headland till at last the Ram's Head, with its bluff projecting brow, came in sight, and the white-sailed ships swept in or glided out behind the bluff headland, and thus betrayed the entrance to the haven under the hill—the opening into the beautiful fiords of Plymouth Sound.

Up to this time the sailing-master of the yacht had been too much engrossed with his duties to take much notice of his passengers; but now his brow relaxed, and he began to point out the various points of interest; for the yacht now shot past into the tranquil Sound, beneath the wooded heights of Mount Edgcumbe, now in all the tranquil beauty of the shades of evening; while on the opposite side the white houses of the town, the green slopes of the Hoe, and the softly-moulded hills of Devon were all aglow with the glories of the setting sun. Inlets and curving rivers making their way through soft green valleys, bold rocks, and craggy cliffs were here; and the waters winding among them were all alive with every shape and form of craft. Graceful yachts, tall frigates, stern ironclads, all were there; and the elegant, if superannuated, forms of old-fashioned cruisers, where boys swarmed aloft in the rigging, and took in sail, and let go the anchor, and made all snug after the summer cruise. There a gaunt Russian war-ship lay in grim repose, in prim and wooden cleanliness and neatness; and a Spanish corvette flew the national flag defiantly; while a modest German despatch boat seemed to avoid observation in a sequestered nook.

All this scene opened upon them as the yacht ran under the walls of the frowning fort that flanks the Breakwater, and anchored towards the eastern shore of the Sound. And the Captain pointed out with some pride, in the narrow entrance to the upper waters, a rocky isle, from which, according to tradition, a massive chain was stretched at nights from either shore, with the obvious intention of protecting the harbour from roving enemies, but which chain, according to some, was designed for the purpose of chaining Cornwall to England, lest the land of Arthur, and all its famous warlocks and enchanters, should

sail off in the night and be for ever lost to its acquisitive neighbour.

The Captain was an old friend of most on board. We have seen him before—the soft, brown face and curly hair of the youngest of the rescue party in Kylloe Cove on the night when Ethel was brought forth out of the chasm. He was a son of old Dolly Penteasel, and had been known among his comrades as Black Bill, and was more generally called Captain Bill, for the sake of ease and directness of speech. From the time of the shipwreck William Penteasel had risen to the command of a coasting vessel, and, as he was a thorough seaman, with a perfect knowledge of the coast all round, the Admiral had selected him as the master of his yacht.

"We shall not be sailing homewards just yet, Admiral?" suggested Captain Bill, as he appeared in his best gold-laced cap and blue coat to do honour to the "*Atalanta*" as she lay in port. "With this beautiful weather, and the wind that we have got, it will be a shame not to take the ladies for a good cruise."

"If you could only steer us clear of Sunday, William," said the parson ruefully. The Admiral called for the opinion of his passengers. Ethel was enthusiastically for going on cruising. Madame Bertrand suggested that surely the voyage need not end till they moored the yacht beneath the walls of Bellefond.

Captain Bill looked a little taken aback at this suggestion.

"Indeed, I promised my mother——" he began, but paused, abashed at the laughter that rose against him.

The parson, however, did not laugh, but his face glowed with indignation.

"What, Master William, do you think your mother can put a spell over us, to hinder our voyage? I'll have you know that I can loosen the strongest spell that the Evil One can devise."

"I'm not denying that, your reverence," said the Captain humbly. "But it's always best to be friends with both sides. Yet, whatever the Admiral's orders are, they must be obeyed."

The Admiral temporised a little. "We will run along the coast as far as Portsmouth," he said. For he thought that perhaps after all Donald would be able to join them, supposing that there was no serious outbreak of disease on board the transport—anyhow, there would be means of communicating with him. Madame Bertrand decided that in any case she

would make her way home without returning to Polpernac, and Wilkins would go on shore and telegraph for her maid and baggage to come on by the first available train. The Admiral and Ethel also went ashore to make some purchases, and to visit an old comrade of the former who was on the station. The Count and Madame Bertrand preferred to remain on board. The scene was so pleasant and perfect, the former declared, that he could not break the charm by contact with the ordinary sights and sounds of a seaport town. Thus they were left to themselves, for the parson and Tregoes had found acquaintances among the floating population in the Sound—young men who passed the greater part of the year in cruising, fishing, and shooting about the coast.

The scene was, as the Count said, almost perfect as the solemn stillness of evening came on and the moon rose from behind the Mewstone and bathed the tranquil waters in its silver light. Then the earlier effect was reversed, the woods and glades of Mount Edgcumbe lit up with a tender radiance, while the heights and hills on the other side were in the mysterious gloom and shadow, with lights shining and twinkling from height to height.

"If some one would sing now," said the Count languidly, as he placed himself by the side of Madame Bertrand, who was reclining in a low lounging chair on deck. "Some liquid Italian voice sounding over the water would be the crown of the enchantment."

As if in answer to the Count's desire, from a royal ship that had just come into harbour after a lengthened cruise in foreign waters and had anchored close by there came the sound of music. First a fiddle played, and the lively beat of a sailor's hornpipe was heard in the still air. Then some old tar sang a snatch of old-fashioned song:

What cheer, my hearts? the bold and brave  
Alone deserve the fair;  
The jackets blue who plough the wave,  
Can all things do and dare.  
O fair maids of our sea-girt isle,  
Be to your lovers true;  
Greet home with loving word and smile  
Your lads in red and blue!  
*Your Lads in Red and Blue.*

"Well sung?" cried the Count, clapping his hands languidly. "If not exactly what I wished for, yet perhaps even more in keeping with the scene. Here we have the home of the British naval tradition. Francis Drake looks down upon us from

those heights where he played his famous game of bowls, to be finished in spite of Don Spaniard. Here on these waters floated the ships of Raleigh, of Hawkins, and the rest—half pirates and half patriots."

Madame Bertrand murmured some reply which was not very much to the purpose. There was nothing in all this that interested her. "Let us talk about ourselves," she continued abruptly, "now that we have that rare opportunity. I have followed your instructions, you see, Victor."

"Ma foi, yes; you have done very well," said the Count with careless approval.

"Victor!" said Helen, turning upon him a searching glance. "I can't divine your purpose; but from what I have noticed I fear that it bodes no good to me."

"And yet you are willing to help me. There is the true spirit of womanly devotion."

"You mock me, Victor," cried Madame Bertrand, her eyes kindling with fire; "and that is never safe with a woman. Do you think I have not noticed your devotion to my friend? Is it pleasant for me to play the supernumerary in such a company?"

"Let us talk like reasonable beings," said the Count. "Things cannot go on for ever on their present footing. You will always occupy the first place in my heart, adorable Helen; but for the sake of appearances I must range myself like the rest. Would you have a love episode end in tragedy?"

"It may end thus in spite of your cold-blooded precautions," cried Helen firmly. "But if you want my help you must reveal your plans. For you have some motive, I am sure, other than your newborn passion."

"I will deal frankly with you," said the Count. "My visit here to this wonderful country of Arthur and his braves is not purely accidental. But to enable you to understand me I must remind you of a piece of family history. My father and the Duc de St. Croix, who was well known as the friend of the Emperor, his partner in turf enterprises and, as scandal has it, also of the Stock Exchange—well, my father and the Duc were brothers, and married two sisters, heiresses of the ancient house of de Malherbe. My father had one son, your humble servant. The Duc had only a daughter. In everything the poor man was Anglophil; his daughter was brought up after the English pattern of independence and self-reliance. But when she came to eighteen years of age then the

English system broke down. Her father had found a suitable "parti" in the person of a highly distinguished statesman; not young, but of immense wealth and paramount influence. He had his reasons, the good man. He foresaw the shipwreck which was approaching, and he desired to anchor himself and his daughter securely. Well, the poor girl had already chosen on her own account a handsome young Englishman, rich and of good family, but whose father and the Duc had quarrelled over turf transactions. No matter for mademoiselle, and being in England with her father on a visit to Donchester races, she eloped with this young man—an affair of Gretna Green.

"The Duc was furious; he was a man not only passionate, but remorseless. He took steps to invalidate the marriage in France, as was his paternal right. The Englishman and my fair cousin, beset on both sides by paternal unforgiveness, renounced their respective countries, and, happy in each other, set sail for the Pacific. They have never returned—but their history does not now concern me. The Duc died some years after, in the midst of the sad days of disaster for France and the Empire. This daughter was of course his heir. He had not the power—even if the will—to cut her off, as is the pleasant English custom, with one shilling. No, what he left behind was hers and hers alone. But she was not to be found. Nothing had been heard of her for the four years which, under the code, constitute one an absentee. Search was made, the usual notifications published, without result. At the end of the prescribed period, an administrator of the estate was appointed—myself. I have since enjoyed the revenue of the property, but I can neither mortgage nor sell it, and, as you can well believe, the income is entirely eaten away by my creditors. For I am always subject to be called upon to restore the estate, with a fifth of the profits I have enjoyed during possession, should my cousin re-appear. But if I can prove her death, I am freed from many painful embarrassments: I can sell, I can mortgage——"

"And is that all?" asked Helen, regarding him fixedly, and then shaking her head. "No, there is no sufficient motive there. You have something else in the background."

"My dear Helen, how clear-sighted you are!" said the Count. "Does it not strike



you that if I am right as to the shipwreck—that there might possibly be a survivor. Who is this little child that was rescued from the waves?"

"I begin to see," said Helen. "This child, you suspect, is hers?"

"Suspect! I am convinced of it."

"But, after all, what is she?—the child of nobody; without rights, without a name."

"Softly there, Helen," said the Count. "In our own country, agreed; but here in England she would inherit what her father possessed. Helen, do you know what that is?—the great Vavasar estates; ten thousand pounds a year—a hundred thousand pounds in accumulations. Helen, if I win this, there is ten thousand pounds set apart for you, and all your troubles at an end."

"All at an end," laughed Helen bitterly. "Yes, all will be at an end when you marry Ethel."

"Gently," said the Count. "Here is our worthy patron—our Captain, who is creeping within earshot. I have marked him down as one who knows something about the matter, and who will, at some time, prove a useful witness. Now, here is an opportunity of sounding him."

The Count rose, and walked along the deck to where Captain Bill was leaning over the vessel's side smoking, and looking thoughtfully into the water, which gleamed with opalescent sparkles as the tide rippled against the vessel's side.

"You are an old friend of the Admiral's and of Miss Ethel, I hear, mon brave," began the Count, taking his stand by the Captain and offering his cigar-case. Captain Bill took a cigar and placed it in the crown of his cap before he replied.

"I have known the Admiral all my life, sir, seeing I was born in Kylloe Cove, and Miss Ethel ever since she was a child—and helped to rescue her from the sea."

"I have heard all the story of the shipwreck," said the Count significantly. "But is it not strange, my friend, that nothing should have come ashore—no dead bodies, no wreckage, that should give any clue to the secret of her origin?"

"I have heard of stranger things than that," said the Captain doggedly. "There is a current there by Kylloe Head that would carry anything along—ah, who knows, as far as the coast of France, perhaps—farther, for what I know."

"And I have heard, too," continued the Count carelessly, "that sometimes

bodies have been cast ashore, with valuable things about them—gold chains, diamond crosses or bracelets, or what not, and that those who found them have buried them quietly, lest questions should be asked."

"I cannot say as to that," replied the Captain, with a stolid face. "But if so, why not?" he continued, with some sudden heat. "Those who live by the sea, who toil night and day among the waves, with hard lives and poverty, and to lose them they love best one by one, and sometimes all at once—as it might be in a storm, such as the one we spoke of just now—well, if the sea brings 'em a bit of luck once in a lifetime; perhaps you'd have 'em chuck it away, hand it over to my Lord or Sir Squire, as sleeps in a feather bed every night of his life, and never knows what hardship is."

"Well," said the Count, "I am with you there. I don't blame people for keeping what they find, unless they can make more by giving it up. Suppose now that by clearing up this business there was a nice round sum to be made, as well as doing good to Miss Ethel?"

"Well, sir," said the captain, after a moment's thought, "very much of what you say is very good, no doubt, but a great deal beyond the brains of a plain sea-faring man. But there is the Admiral, my master, who understands all these things, and if anything good were coming to Miss Ethel he would be the one to know about it, and to see that she had her rights."

The Count turned on his heel impatiently. The Captain was evidently on his guard, and was not likely to give up this cautious attitude without some satisfactory inducement. Still the Count was certain, from his very caution, that the Captain knew the drift of his enquiries, and was therefore in possession of the information that he sought.

In the meantime the grateful aroma of cooked meats was perceptible in the evening air, and reminded the Count that he was hungry, and that the whole party would soon reassemble at dinner. Indeed, at this moment were heard the oars of the returning boat, that rippling through the dark waters left a track of silvery gleams in its wake.

#### CHAPTER VI. PLYMOUTH SOUND.

BEFORE midnight Wilkins had returned with maids and baggage, and thus everything was ready for an early start next

morning. When the yacht got under weigh, the sun was rising over the headland, touching the shaggy summit of the Mewstone with soft golden glare, and lighting up the dark valley of the Yealine with a strange and subtle glory. When people were awake and on deck, after the scrubbing and holystoning was all over, the yacht was running easily along in full view of the red cliffs of Devon, with here and there an opening to some river inlet, or a gap where a little white hamlet lay almost awash with the sea, or a tiny bay surrounded with white sand, where, as likely as not, a bevy of sea-nymphs would be disporting in the waves. The wind was light and off the shore, so that the yacht ran close in till she was sometimes almost becalmed in the shelter of the cliffs, and the rocky bottom could be seen all gay with zoophytes, and waving sea-weed, and strange gleaming fishes; and so the yacht crept round first the Bolt Tail and then the Bolt Head, and made Prawle Point, and by noon was just off the Start, with Brixham Bay opening out abruptly on the port bow. And now, if mere pleasure-cruising had been in the Admiral's mind, what fairer ground could be chosen than here opened out—Dartmouth, with its beautiful river, pleasant Torquay, and many another pleasant resting-place on the shores of fair Devon?

But the Admiral was bent on reaching Portsmouth, and so the course was laid straight across to the Bill of Portland, a run of fifty miles or so almost out of sight of land. The wind was still light, and the shades of evening were drawing on, and lights were shining out from cape and headland as they made the grey, gloomy Island of Captivity, and saw the long rows of cheerful lights that lined the esplanade of Weymouth. Then night came on softly, and the moon rose and shone upon the gloomy mysterious down, where Corfe gate showed as a black notch in the dusky line of hills, and lights twinkled out from Swanage, where an engine and train of heavy-laden stone waggons made a quite furious disturbance in the stillness of night.

But on rounding the Point, and looking out for leading lights inshore, there appeared a white fog in the Channel, which lay about in patches, not rising very high, but interposing like a wall in the course our voyagers should follow; up to the edge of the wall was clear bright moonlight, which gave the fog the appearance of a great fleecy cloud, but once within the

margin of the fog and there was nothing to be seen but dense mist, even the ships' lights being visible only within the range of a few yards.

From out the fog low and dismal notes, bells ringing, fog-horns booming, and steam whistles shrieking dolefully, showed how many vessels had been caught in the bewildering net. The sea was like glass, for the wind had fallen to a calm, but the tide was running strongly and setting up the bay, and as the fog was stationary, it was not long before the "Atalanta" was drifting helplessly in the very thick of the mist. Captain Bill sent a boy to clang vigorously on the ship's bell, while he took the fog-horn himself, on which he was a skilful performer, sending forth sounds that were terrible enough to wake the dead, and that actually did awaken the living freight of the yacht.

"Pardieu," cried the Count, sticking his head through the hatchway, "what is in the wind now? Is it the last trompette that is sounding so merrily?"

Madame Bertrand called loudly for her maid.

"Ernestine, tell me instantly what has happened."

"And, Ernestine," added Ethel laughing, "bring a becoming robe for your mistress to be shipwrecked in."

But laughter was soon turned to genuine alarm, as there was a rush of feet and loud shouting overhead, while the yacht was spun violently round with a shock that sent those who were standing off their feet, and sprang those who were lying down into the middle of the floor. Then, after a sound of tearing and rending, all was quiet again, except for the voice of Captain Bill, who was cursing and swearing with vehemence.

"Carried away my bowsprit, cap, and bobstay, and—you blessed—blessed—blessed lubbers," roared the Captain, but the steamer that had so nearly run down the "Atalanta" had disappeared altogether—melted away into the mist as it seemed, and those on board made no reply to the objurgations of the captain of the yacht.

All the passengers had rushed on deck, although there was nothing to be seen but the thick white mist. Everybody called to the Admiral, asking what was to be done next; but no answer came. Where was he? He had been on deck the greater part of the night, and when last seen he had gone forward as if to try to make out

something through the fog. Then a sailor found in the bows a black felt hat, which was recognised as the Admiral's. The conclusion was inevitable—he had been swept overboard in the collision.

Ethel uttered one wild cry of anguish as she realised that her dear guardian had disappeared, to be swallowed up, no doubt, in the silent sea. The next moment she had sprung into the dingy that hung over the stern, and was fitted with a self-lowering apparatus that a touch set in action. The other boats were on board, and a few moments' delay occurred before one could be cleared and lowered. The parson sprang in and took an oar, Captain Bill seized another, and without waiting for any others they began to row actively but cautiously in a circle round the yacht, listening eagerly between the strokes of the oars for any cry or voice from the sea. But all was silence, sound as well as sight being muffled up in that terrible white fog.

#### CHAPTER VII. IN THE FOG.

ALTHOUGH Ethel had acted from simple, overmastering impulse in starting single-handed to the rescue, yet she had sufficient presence of mind to see where the chance of rescue lay. It was clear that the Admiral had not simply been thrown overboard by the shock. In that case he was so good a swimmer that he would have soon regained his yacht, or if he had lost sight of her in the plunge yet he would have hailed her from the water. The tide was running strongly indeed, but it carried with it the yacht at the same pace as any other floating object. He might have been stunned, indeed, and in that case there was little hope of seeing him again in life. But possibly he had scrambled on board the colliding steamer. Yet in that case the steamer would have hove to, surely, and tried to communicate with the yacht. And now that Ethel was close to the level of the sea, which was perfectly calm, she could hear distinctly the beat of the steamer's screw, which was making slowly towards the open sea. In that direction she pulled with vigorous strokes, reckless for the moment of everything that might happen to herself. The tide was on the turn, and would soon be running out again, and then small would be her chance of reaching land again; but still she rowed on, driven rather by the necessity of doing something to stave off the inevitable moment of despair rather than by any valid hope.

But just then something dark loomed up in the way. So strange and eerie was the light—the bright moonlight appeared through the fog—that nothing appeared in its true form. This might have been a big ship—it was only a floating spar, but such a spar—it was the broken piece of the "Atalanta's" bowsprit, and a low and stifled cry from alongside gave joyful assurance that it was the Admiral himself who had been clinging to the spar. And now he let go the spar, and made for the stern of the dingy; but almost missed it, so exhausted was he, and but for Ethel's grasp he would have been lost at the moment of deliverance. Even now it was impossible to get him into the boat, which was far too crank for such a business; and had the boat been ever so steady, the poor Admiral was too much exhausted to clamber in, and Ethel was not strong enough to haul him on board. But she passed a rope under his armpits, and sat there chafing his hands and crying a little over him, resolved that if he went down she would go down with him. And so they drifted away with the tide in the soft obscurity of the white sea fog.

Then of a sudden a marvellous change occurred. A fresh westerly breeze came rustling over the sea, and rolled up the white mist, just as the draper's man rolls up a bundle of fleecy cloth, and in a moment everything stood out clear and distinct in the bright moonlight. Close at hand rode a vessel at anchor brilliantly lighted up and casting a radiant track over the waters. The little boat in its swift drifting course just failed to wreck herself on the vessel's anchor chains, and span along, just scraping her smooth sides. Ethel had still time to seize a boat-hook and hang on to the ladder that hung over the side, and then she gave a loud cry for help.

At once two or three nimble seamen were over the ship's side, and in less time than it takes to tell it Ethel and the Admiral were hauled up the ship's side and safely deposited on deck. It was evident that they were on board a steam yacht, and one luxuriously fitted up. A smart-looking personage, half-sailor, half major-domo, advanced to receive the unexpected guests, as the Admiral, coming to himself a little, shook like a great water dog and diffused streams and showers of salt water about him. "You would like a change of clothing, I've no doubt," said the major-domo with as much aplomb as if

half-drowned people were constantly coming on board. "Madam, I will send a maid to attend upon you."

"Stay," cried Ethel, "pray whose yacht is this we are trespassing upon?"

"Mr. Walter Vavasor's, madam," replied the servant.

"Have I passed into the land of shadows?" murmured the Admiral. "Mr. Walter Vavasor's yacht, did you say?"

"The Squire is not at home at present, you understand," explained the man affably. "He is travelling abroad. Miss Vavasor makes use of the yacht during his absence, and is now on board."

"Pray do not disturb her," cried the Admiral. "If you will ask the sailing-master to send me on board my own craft. She can't be very far off."

The "Atalanta" had come to an anchor not more than a mile away, and was burning blue lights and throwing up rockets on the bare chance of her signals being seen by the missing boats. There was, it may be imagined, a joyful meeting on board when the Admiral and Ethel were discovered safe and sound.

#### CHAPTER VIII. DISPERSAL.

WHEN morning came it was found that the yacht had drifted close in shore before she anchored, and that she was beneath the sand-hills and steep pine dunes of Bournemouth, where signs of life and animation presented themselves, although the season, according to hotel and lodging-house keepers, had not yet begun. And here the party on board the "Atalanta" showed signs of breaking up. The accident to the yacht might involve two or three days' detention, and Sunday was imminent, and the parson of Kyloe was obliged to go back to his charge.

The Count had almost pledged himself, he said, to go to Donchester for the races, and Madame Bertrand determined to go on to Southampton and take the steamer to Havre, so as to make her preparations at Bellefond for her expected guests. As for Tregoes, he was a little tired of the regular life on board, and had offered to take care of Madame Bertrand as far as Havre, intending to spend a few days at Trouville before he joined the party at Bellefond.

All this suited the Admiral extremely well. He felt little the worse in health for his prolonged immersion, still it had given him a shock. He had given himself up for

lost, and then he experienced the bitter feeling that he left Ethel unprovided for. His sister was an excellent woman; but what sort of a life would she lead poor Ethel when the latter was entirely dependent upon her! Besides, as the owner of Polpernac, she would be sought by wooers enough, and then she was quite capable of marrying one of them; and what would Ethel's position be then?

All these things had flashed upon the mind of the drowning man, and had filled him with bitter regret; and the feeling remained, and, now that he owed his life to Ethel, was even intensified. He had pledged his word that his sister should have Polpernac, and he could not break it; but if he could see Ethel engaged to such an excellent fellow as Donald Graham his anxiety would be lessened, and then he might hope to persuade his sister that it would be well to settle Polpernac, after her death, upon the young people. The parson of Kyloe, to whom the Admiral had confided all these considerations, was charged with the task of bringing round Miss Langford to this arrangement.

Ethel, in telling the adventures of the Admiral and herself to the Count among the rest, had dwelt upon the singular fact that they should have been taken on board Miss Vavasor's yacht.

The Count saw at once that here was an opportunity he ought to seize for interviewing that lady, and as soon as he went ashore he found out where she was staying. Miss Vavasor was well known at Bournemouth; she occupied a house on the hillside that belonged to Squire Vavasor, the latter being known by name only to the inhabitants of Bournemouth. Miss Vavasor had landed that morning from her yacht, and had taken up her abode at Hill-side, and the Count, at the earliest moment possible, presented himself at her door.

There were difficulties in the way. Miss Vavasor did not receive; she would not see anybody. But the Count persevered. He had news, he said, of her brother; and this fiction of his proved an open sesame.

Miss Vavasor received the Count in her morning-room, and with the most freezing dignity.

"If you are a relation of the Duc de St. Croix," she began.

"His nephew, madam," interposed the Count.

"Then you must know," continued Miss Vavasor, "that the cruel treatment that Mrs. Vavasor received from him and his



family, has indisposed me to hold any friendly intercourse with those of his name."

The Count was secretly overjoyed. It was quite clear that on the side of the Vavasors the marriage was acknowledged, and that went a long way to satisfy him of the prudence of his course. His face, however, expressed only a polite concern. "I do not justify my relative's conduct," he said; "it was cruel, unworthy even, still he had the right."

"He took advantage of a very partial, and I consider wicked state of law," replied Miss Vavasor with warmth, "such as is an insult to every other civilised nation."

"Ah, madam, I am very much of your opinion," said the Count, "and, as the head of the family, I would do all in my power to justify Mrs. Vavasor's position in her native country, and I learn with delight that you have recent news of my dear cousin."

"Indeed!" said Miss Vavasor calmly, but not without an inward tremor. "I never correspond with my brother's wife. It is always from my brother that I hear, and that, alas, very seldom. But you have recent news of him," she cried, with a touch of expectation in her voice.

"My news is not very definite," said the Count, "but I heard from a friend who has recently returned from Naples, that he formed the acquaintance there of a Count di Vavasor, his wife, and a charming family, and from certain circumstances I judged that this was a name assumed by your brother."

Miss Vavasor's face clouded with indescribable disappointment.

"My brother is not in Italy," she said coldly, "and would not assume any foreign title; he would consider his own of an English gentleman far superior."

The Count bit his lip to suppress a smile at what he considered insular absurdity.

"In that case, madam," he rejoined, "I must ask you to supply me with your latest news as to my cousin. They have children, no doubt, whose position I may help to regulate."

"Thank you," cried Miss Vavasor, trembling with emotion, "we will not trouble you, I am sure. Mrs. Vavasor will renounce all connection with a family that has treated her so shamefully."

"As to that my cousin is the best judge. I shall bow to her decision," said the Count, "when I have it from her own lips."

"You may take it from me," cried Miss Vavasor with passion; "we wish to have nothing more to do with you. Is it necessary that I should speak more plainly?"

"But, madam," cried the Count with an air of dignified tolerance, "this is a matter which concerns my honour. The estates which my uncle possessed have been, for want of any proof of his daughter's existence, handed over to my keeping; afford me that proof, and it will be my duty to restore all that rightly belongs to her."

Miss Vavasor was shaken in her unpromising attitude by this proof of the Count's magnanimity. Here was one whose motives were high and honourable, and she had treated him as if he were some adventurer scheming for his own profit. Surely she owed the Count some amends.

It was quite true that Miss Vavasor had forced herself to believe in her brother's existence. But she had lately entertained horrible doubts. And the thought that she might eventually be compelled to share the estate with her sister—that noble estate, which should always belong to a Vavasor, was gall and wormwood to her. Worse still was the reflection that all would eventually go to the Grahams—a family she detested. Yes, Donald would inherit Coningsberg should it prove that her brother was dead and had left no children.

#### CHAPTER IX. THE SOLENT.

By this time the "Atalanta" was under weigh, and in charge of a tug, which was to tow the yacht into Portsmouth Harbour, where she could repair damages. Captain Bill had been hard to please in the matter of the tug. Several had offered their services, but their terms were too high. They were disposed to treat the "Atalanta" as a disabled craft just because she had carried away her bowsprit; and the Captain had made up his mind to work the yacht in, crippled as she was, when one of the tug-masters came to reasonable terms.

But it was evening before they had crossed Christchurch Bay and reached the entrance to the Solent, always a pleasant scene, but especially so in the sunset hour, with Hurst Castle standing out boldly at the head of the wooded promontory, and the jagged Needles rising sheer from the waves, while the tall cliffs of Alum Bay glow in the rays of the setting sun with bands of every imaginable colour. A fresh westerly breeze was blowing, and the sea

was what Captain Bill called "lumpy," and dashed against the rocks, fringed with roseate masses of foam and showers of spray that were arched with rainbow hues. And then, as soon as the lights of Hurst Castle were passed, a solemn stillness and quietude succeeded the life and colour of the outer passage.

Here a little assemblage of masts and twinkling lights indicated the haven of Yarmouth, behind which rose the massive downs, sombre and sharply defined against the evening glow, whilst the low shore on the opposite side was crowned with dark wooded masses, that showed the outskirts of the New Forest, the fated hunting ground of the royal race of old. Lights gleamed from the shore, lights gleamed on the water, white sails moved ghostlike to and fro, while evening bells sounded softly from village churches, and the waning splendour of the west was rivalled by the yellow glow of the full September moon as she rose from the sea and cast a refulgent patch of golden light over the rippling waters.

The brilliant lights of East and West Cowes were reflected from the dark shadowed bosom of the Medina River, and stretched out along the shore, and gleamed out from wooded knolls, as if here were the veritable Land of Faery—the Island of the Blessed that so many have sought in vain.

The broad entrance to Southampton Water, that seems like the inlet to some inland sea, was hung about with a thin white mist, through which gleamed the flashing lights of warning beacons, while, with hollow booming sound, some huge steamer came slowly along on her way to some distant Indian gulf.

It was past midnight now, and the Admiral had turned in for the night, but Ethel still remained on deck, charmed and soothed by the loveliness of the night. "We shall see Donald to-morrow," the Admiral had said to her gently as he left the deck, and this was the first intimation she had had that he was so near. The fact was, that the Admiral had telegraphed from Bournemouth, and had received a reply. The ship would be released from quarantine on the following day, but Donald could not leave his regiment, as it was ordered to Ireland, and all leave of absence was stopped for the present. "We land, and shall be inspected on Southsea Common to-morrow, at eleven," the telegram further stated, and this would be the one

opportunity of meeting Donald before he left for Ireland.

Now, Ethel had not quite made up her mind as to how she felt about Donald, and she wished that she could meet him on their old footing of easy friendship. But Donald's letter, asking her to be his wife, which she carried in her bosom, put an end to all that. She was not quite sure whether she loved him enough to marry him. Perhaps she might if he tried to make her, but there was no opportunity for that now. She must be ready with an answer; and she felt with some vexation that her presence at Southsea on the following day would be construed by Donald as something like an affirmative.

Now, if Ethel looked on Donald with favour, that certainly was not the case with Donald's mother. Ethel had met Mrs. Graham once or twice, and had not liked her. She was still a handsome and spirited woman, but proud and overbearing; and she had hurt Miss Beauty's pride, which was also pretty strong, by sundry disparaging allusions to her unknown origin. Now her influence over her son was strong, and Donald had almost worshipped his mother, till his devotion had been removed to another shrine, and she was not likely to approve of his choice. Donald, in his letter, said that he was sure she would approve; but that showed that he had not asked her approval, and that he knew nothing about the matter. It was not an insignificant consideration that Mrs. Graham held the purse-strings, and that she was also in virtual command of Donald's uncle—Graham, of Mousehold Tower—to whose property Donald was heir apparent. Was Donald strong enough to combat these hostile influences—hostile, that is, to his marriage with Beauty?

In the midst of her reflections, Beauty's attention was attracted by the lights of a fast steamer that was quickly overhauling the yacht and her attendant tug, and which came up to them and passed so closely that with her glass Ethel could make out some of the faces on deck. And upon the paddle-box, in a sheltered seat, she saw two figures that were familiar to her. One was Helen's, no doubt, and this, then, was the steamer from Southampton for the French coast—but whose was the other, that shared the same cloak, and seemed absorbed in earnest conversation? A gleam of light revealed the face, it was the Count's, and he was returning with Madame Bertrand.

The sight was disquieting to Ethel, for it revealed an understanding between her friend and the Count, which she had been before ignorant of. And the Count had been so attentive, and had made himself so agreeable to Ethel, taking her into his confidence as it seemed, and confiding to her all his plans, that she felt indignant with Madame Bertrand for having thus enticed him away; for the Count had certainly left them with the intention of going to Doncaster.

#### CHAPTER X. PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR.

MORNING was well advanced before Ethel made her appearance on deck, and found the yacht lying quietly in Portsmouth Harbour, surrounded by craft great and small. The gallant old "Victory" lay close at hand, and another old three-decker bore the flag of the Port Admiral, giving an old-world aspect to that part of the harbour, while steam pinnaces, torpedo boats, and gunboats, darting along with or against the tide, presented the modern aspects of naval armaments. A number of boats, too, were alongside, proffering services of various kinds, and a brand-new spar glittered in the place of the broken bowsprit; while men were at work with paint-pots and scrapers effacing all traces of the recent collision.

On the land side there is little in Portsmouth to suggest its being a great naval and military dépôt. The old county town High Street looks as peaceable and commonplace as possible, except that here and there a sentry mounts guard over a house that otherwise you would guess was the residence of the head solicitor or chief physician. But from the harbour, Portsmouth has a jolly sea-going air. The Hard stretches out till it looks as if it were afloat on the tide, and against a stormy sky the houses gleam with wonderful radiance in a stray gleam of sunshine; and you may think of war times when this was the last glimpse of home to many a gallant fellow, and of times to come, possibly, when the black forts out there are gruffly baying at the foe, and the hearts of those ashore beating higher or lower with the louder or more distant roar of the battle.

Just in front of the yacht a ponderous ferry-boat plied to and fro, held by a massive chain, which it raised and let fall in its progress with much clanking and perturbation. And presently from out of dingy houses and rows of dealers' shops

that line the other side of the harbour—Gosport hight—rolls out a bright scarlet stream, with the rowtow of drums and the shrill scream of fifes, and when these are silent, the rich notes of military music fill the air. Into the big, black ferry-boat the scarlet ribbon winds itself with easy and regular motion, mounted officers ride on board, and the whole concern glitters in scarlet, black, and gold, as it goes clanking across the water.

The Admiral comes on board in a great hurry. He has hired a carriage for the review, which will commence at an earlier hour than was expected. There was no time to be lost, and the Admiral fumed and fretted because breakfast was not ready half an hour before he had ordered it. Then, as breakfast was going on, Wilkins came off with the letters, which he had been waiting for at the post-office. Ethel had a long letter from Miss Langford, giving an account of the pilchard fishing, of sundry mysterious warnings from Dolly Pentecost, and how, as the planets ruled, peril from crossing the seas was above all things to be avoided. Miss Langford, too, noted with sorrow that Mr. Tregoes had left them, and she feared that Ethel had not treated him properly.

But a note of far more engrossing interest was one which, perhaps, Miss Beauty ought to have received with distrust, but which, on the contrary, she read eagerly and carefully treasured. The note was unsigned, but the paper bore the crest and coronet of the Count de St. Croix, and there was no attempt to conceal the identity of the writer.

"Circumstances have occurred which throw a strong light upon the family origin of *cette chère Mademoiselle de Beauté*. Her devoted servant, abandoning all other pursuits, has hastened to verify these surmises at the Château Bellefond. And he hoped before long to claim a missing relative, whose affection he will esteem as beyond all other gifts. At Bellefond he will hope to receive this marvellous prize."

The Admiral was not nearly so well satisfied with his correspondence. He frowned and muttered, stamped on the deck and, it is to be feared, swore. He took furtive glances at Ethel, and finally, as if in despair, he threw over his despatches for her perusal.

"Read these letters," he cried, "you ought to know their contents, but they shall make no difference."

The first letter was from Mrs. Graham, and short and curt enough. "Dear Admiral," she wrote, "Donald has written me some nonsense about marrying Ethel. He shall never marry a girl of unknown origin, so long as I have any influence over him; and I am sure Donald has too much affection for his mother to act against her known wishes—to say nothing of his having not a penny in the world but what I give him."

The other letter was in a different strain: "Dear Langford," it ran, "in the main I agree with my sister-in-law—not that I value birth one farthing—a great spirit may be born in a cowshed, if the stars are propitious, and a small and mean one in a palace, when the planetary influences are adverse. You know my weakness, as you call it—a weakness which I share with some of the greatest minds of past and present times—and how, like the great sages of antiquity, I seek to spell out the future from the stars. I have carefully calculated poor Donald's nativity, and I find a fatal influence predominant in the cusps of the fourth house. However, I need not waste my proofs on an unbeliever; suffice it that in his twenty-fifth year Donald is under extreme peril from an influence which, with all my knowledge of the noble art and science, I do not succeed in unmasking. I do not say that this influence is your ward's; but, to my horror, I find that even the very day of her birth is unknown—to say nothing of hour, minute, or second—and the latitude and longitude of place of birth equally uncertain. Thus, Miss Ethel is to me an entirely unknown quantity, an insoluble problem which I must exclude from my calculations. Now, I don't ask you, Langford, whether Ethel's parents were princes or peasants; only give me the data I want—I won't insist on seconds, but exactly to the minute, if you please, and I will soon work out the nativity—and, if there is nothing adverse therein to Donald's house of life, well, then I will welcome them both to Mousehold and my oatcake and bannock. And so, affectionately yours,

"HECTOR GRAHAM."

If Ethel was indignant at the first of these letters, and its harshness; the second one delighted and even touched her.

"What a clever old man that must be!" she cried. "And, do you know, dear uncle, he has touched what has long been a secret sorrow? You have been everything that is kind and indulgent; you always gave me everything I asked for,

but you could not give me a birthday. Other girls had their birthdays. I always felt like a pariah when they were celebrated. Now, let us give up all thoughts of marrying anybody, or intruding into other people's families, till we have found out who I really am."

"But, Beauty," cried the Admiral, "where shall we go? How shall we begin? I ought, perhaps, to have taken more pains years ago; but I was loth to lose you."

"And you shall not lose me, dear," cried Beauty, kissing the Admiral's bald forehead. "You are more to me than anybody else in the world. But let us solve the mystery, and then—well, then we shall see," added Beauty, proudly but indefinitely. "Only, I have got a clue, I think," she continued, "and it is a clue that leads us to Bellefond."

"Why, then, let us go there, in Heaven's name," said the Admiral. "But we'll see poor Donald first, and persuade him to patience." And then the Admiral called for his Captain.

"When will you be ready for sea, William?" he asked.

"We are ready now, Admiral," cried Captain Bill proudly.

"You have been smart," said the Admiral; and Captain Bill beamed all over at the acknowledgment. "Well, work out of harbour as soon as you can, and pick us up in about two hours' time from Southsea Pier."

#### CHAPTER XI. A REVIEW AT SOUTHSEA.

WHEN the Admiral's carriage reached Southsea Common the review had actually commenced. The different regiments were formed in the long, thin red line of the favourite old British character; and in the general haze and glitter the position of any insignificant creature in the way of a subaltern was hard to determine.

The General and his aides galloped up and down the line, their white plumes nodding in the absurd way affected by cocked-hat plumes. Then, presently the troops were skirmishing all over the ground; the blue-jackets were among them with their machine guns, and the garrison artillery with their thirty-two pounders. The sun shone and the dust blew, and the crowds of spectators thickened as the engagement went on; while blue sky and blue sea seemed to meet, and the white sails on the sea and the white wings in the



air were hardly to be distinguished one from the other. Then the troops were massed again in column for the march past. And now the Borderers were plainly to be distinguished, with their white pith helmets and generally bronzed and seasoned faces and faded uniforms.

"And they've got to be marched right away off to the docks, and go on board, and just come off a long voyage, and it's a burning shame," cried a young woman who stood against a wheel of the Admiral's carriage. "And me come forty miles to meet my Tom. And they won't let sweethearts so much as pass the Dock gates."

"How can they?" asked a sympathetic policeman who was helping to keep the ground. "All the gals in Portsmouth would be sweethearts if they did. And let 'em once break off those lads out of the ranks they would not get 'em back under a week."

"And no blame to the poor lads," cried the soldier's sweetheart; "and they come out of the dropsical climates, and been sailing all round the world, as you may say."

Just then a bronzed, sunburnt head appeared at the carriage door.

"Beauty! Dear Admiral!" in breathless tones. "I caught sight of you just now, and I have been running ever since. Well, it is jolly to be with you again."

It was Donald, who seemed everjoyed to see them, and as if he could not keep his eyes off Ethel.

"I have run awful risks," he cried, "to join you. 'Colonel,' I said, 'if I'm broke I must go and see my friends.' 'Well, then, go and be—something unpolite—he said; and here I am.'"

"I'll go and see your Colonel," said the Admiral decisively. "I must get a week's leave for you, Donald."

"And so, Beauty," cried Donald, "you are really glad to see me."

"Yes, I am very glad," said Beauty frankly, "so will all your friends be, your mother especially."

Donald looked at Beauty rather ruefully.

"Don't mix up your welcome, Beauty, with all the world's. And my mother—you have heard from her perhaps?" he asked with secret misgivings.

"Yes, we have heard," said Beauty, nodding her head gravely. "Look here, Donald," she cried with sudden inspiration, "we have only got a few hours to ether—let us spend them on the old footing, asking no questions and raising no doubts. We'll only just be jolly, as we used to be."

"With all my heart," said Donald; "you used always to kiss me, you know, when we met in the old days."

"Ah, so many things have happened since then!" said Beauty demurely.

"Why, what has happened? Oh, Beauty, there is nobody else, surely. Oh, tell me there is nobody else!"

"Oh, there are lots of them!" said Beauty, laughing; "I have offended Tregoes, so he doesn't count."

"Hang Tregoes!" said Donald, "I don't care for him; but what is this I hear about a foreign Count?"

"Who can have dared to talk about me?" cried Beauty, colouring, and really indignant.

"Oh, I have had a most mysterious warning!" cried Donald; "but there, dear Beauty, don't let us quarrel."

"That was one of our old habits, I think," said Beauty, rather sadly. "Donald, I am afraid you were very overbearing."

Just then the Admiral made his appearance, looking rather vexed.

"It is no use, Donald," he cried, "your Colonel says that if he lets you go not a man will he get to cross the Channel. But I have done this much: I have pledged my word that you shall meet the regiment at Kingstown and march into barracks with them. You can do it easily, Donald. Run up to London by the last train, and by the Holyhead mail in the morning; and our boat is at the pier-head, Donald, and we will have a jolly day's cruise together as in the old times."

"Yes, that will be delightful," cried Beauty, clapping her hands; "one more cruise together as in the old, old times."

It need hardly be said what a pleasant day's voyage they had, cruising about among those pleasant waters, landing at Beaulieu and picnicking among the woods. If Lieutenant Graham could not refrain now and then from letting fall little innuendoes about the Count, the Admiral, on his part, had evidently returned from his short interview with the officers of the regiment primed with some story about Donald, something about shooting among the hills, and an adventure in a cave. And during the day as the yacht was floating placidly on the calm waters, almost motionless, except when a rustling breeze filled her broad sails, and she forged ahead for awhile, the Admiral asked Donald pointedly if he were as happy now as in the bungalow among the hills.

"A great deal more so," replied Donald,

laughing; "but as you seem inclined to chaff me on the subject, I may as well tell you the whole story; for there is a story, although I am not the hero of it, that is, if the hero must necessarily be the one who is in love with the heroine."

And so Donald told his story under the cool shade of the awning, while Beauty listened like another Desdemona while her lover discoursed of "antres vast and deserts idle,"\* interrupting him occasionally with some exclamation of pity or approval.

When the story was finished, and Ethel had run down into the cabin to set out their afternoon tea-table, for Donald's time was now growing short:

"Oh, hang it!" said the Admiral, "you should have kept that up, Donald, that little delusion about the girl in the bungalow. There's nothing like a little jealousy, my boy, to bring a girl round to you."

"That's how you succeeded, Admiral," suggested Donald in a caustic mood.

"No, my boy, that was where I failed," replied the Admiral good-humouredly. "I was too loyal, too devoted; and a gallant lady-killer of the other branch of the service came, and saw, and conquered. And that was your father, my lad," added the Admiral below his breath.

"Let me fail in the same way," said Donald, "if fail I must."

As the evening shades began to fall overhead, and sea and the yacht drifted slowly towards her moorings, the sailors who were smartened up for going ashore in their blue jackets and white trousers, struck up a glee in the fore-castle; and as there were some good voices among them the effect was charming, as the voices floated away over the still waters. Then they begged that Miss Beauty would favour them with a song, and Beauty complied, giving them a sparkling sea song. Then Donald was called upon, and as he was known to be a good singer no excuses were tolerated.

"Then I'll give you one of my own," said Donald, glancing lovingly at Beauty; "one I wrote coming home, which a man of ours set to music."

#### HOME AGAIN!

WHEN at the lonely midnight hour  
My watch I kept, 'neath tropic skies,  
I thought of her who hath the power  
To witch me with her starry eyes.  
Not brighter did the fireflies show,  
Or shone the golden stars above,  
With warmer or more ardent glow,  
Than shine the sweet eyes of my love!

\* "The Soldier's Story," page 40.

Now back returned across the main,  
From India's strand to England's Isle;  
Fain would I hope that once again  
Upon my suit my love may smile.  
Let her but raise to mine her eyes,  
I need no words the truth to tell;  
That which within their soft depths lies,  
My heart will read—and all be well!

Donald's song was rewarded with much applause by all except Beauty herself, who could not make up her mind whether she liked it or not.

Then the moment of departure arrived, and Ethel and the Admiral accompanied Donald to the station and saw him off. Donald was hopeful, and yet a little disappointed that the course of true love did not run quite smooth. The Beauty and her guardian returned to the yacht.

Next morning nothing was to be seen of the "Atalanta," which had sailed at daybreak for her trip across the Channel.

#### CHAPTER XII. AT NEWMARKET.

IN the hasty glimpse that Beauty had gained of the group on board the French steamer her eyes had not deceived her. It was really the Count who was on board, for he had changed his plans suddenly after his interview with Miss Vavasor. And, by means of a little judicious flattery and gentle pressure he had induced Laurence Tregoes to go to Doncaster in his stead.

The Count had information that promised to be really valuable. Some of his countrymen had in training a horse—or rather, a mare, to be precise—for the great autumn handicaps at Newmarket, whose form was so little known even to the all-knowing judges who framed the handicaps, that the two races were virtually given away to the dark candidate. Profound as the secret was meant to be the Count was lucky enough to share it, and could he only succeed in securing the liberal odds that were quoted against the mare he might hope to clear a considerable sum of money—enough to carry him on till he should be in a position to claim the Vavasor estate as Beauty's husband. There were difficulties in the way, however. The knowledge that the Count had been backing that particular mare would soon bring the odds laid against her to a very small figure. And in that case her owners, finding themselves forestalled in the market, would probably strike her out of the races she was engaged for. In that case, farewell to his golden dreams.

But Laurence Tregoes was exactly the man he wanted for his scheme, as he was just well enough known, as a young man of property, who had an ambition to get rid of his paternal acres on the turf, to be above suspicion. He could be trusted, too, more completely than a wiser man. And so Laurence departed for a tour among the various racecourses and sporting centres, with a commission to back the French mare in all these quarters for sums individually small, but amounting in the aggregate to a considerable sum—a sum which, multiplied by the odds obtainable—forty or fifty to one—would result in a famous dividend for the confederacy.

The errand was one that exactly suited Tregoes' inclinations and capacity, and he executed his task with a good deal of skill and acumen. He had placed a good deal of money without disturbing the market to any great extent. The owners of the horse had backed it on favourable terms, and knowing people in general had picked up the crumbs that were left.

People acquainted with the turf say that the once great races of the year are in a state of decadence. Even the Derby is destined to eclipse, and the St. Leger will perhaps sink into obscurity. The great Daimios on the turf may perhaps go on running horses for the honour or the pleasure of the thing on the great open racecourses of ancient fame, but the racing of the future will, according to the authorities before-named, be conducted behind boards and hoardings, where only those who pay are allowed to see the fun. There is likely to be an exception, however, in the annual festival on Newmarket Heath, known as the Second October Meeting. All East Anglia, from the lonely sands of Lincolnshire to the thronged and noisy White-chapel and Mile End, enters itself solidly for Newmarket races, all profane East Anglia, that is—the world of publicans, of butchers, bakers, cabmen, and others—of anyone in fact who has anything to do with a horse. All these concentrate themselves and their earnings, their savings, sometimes their owings, and occasionally perhaps their stealings, en masse upon Newmarket Heath.

The breezy Heath itself, where the white posts and rails meander over the bright green turf, is rather puzzling to strangers, with its courses running here and there, its T.Y.C., its Ditch Mile, and other mysterious ins and outs, all suitable to the days when a knot of Corinthians on horse-

back, with bell-crowned hats and gilt buttons on their swallow-tailed coats, almost had the place to themselves.

There they might trot from place to place—here for a match and there for a sweep-stakes, and somewhere else for the whip or silver horn that formed the trophy of victory, while a flying column of hangers-on, with benches and three-legged stools represented the Grand Stand and the betting-ring and enclosure and all the business apparatus of to-day. Still, as the bell rings to clear the course, its echoes have something of a ghostly sound, conjuring up the legions of sleek-coated steeds and dusky horsemen who have all galloped away to Hades, and are perhaps still running shadowy races in that silent land.

But Laurence Tregoes was too much excited to notice anything beyond the betting-ring and the paddock, where the horses engaged made their first appearance. He had gone on backing horses on his own account at the various races he had attended, and he had lost with great regularity and perseverance. The betting fraternity looked upon him as a gold mine, and they smiled among themselves when poor Tregoes, parting with his money, was still always asking: "What about the French mare?"

All kinds of rumours had been current only the night before the race in the betting-rooms at Newmarket. The mare was not meant to win; she had gone amiss; she would be knocked out in the morning; and Tregoes had trembled, but still had gone on. And now, if the mare did not win, Treforeign would surely have to go to the hammer. He had lost all his confidence now, and what would he not have given to find himself at Treforeign as he was before the Count had enticed him into this mess, and all the rest but an evil dream?

But when the numbers went up on the telegraph-board, and Tregoes found that the mare was among the starters, he gave a wild cry of delight. Everybody he knew had told him she would not start; and then she came along in all the pride of perfect health and condition among the crowd of silken-coated horses and the flashing colours of the jockeys.

Tregoes rushed back to the ring, fired with all the enthusiasm of the moment to back his choice with everyone who would lay against her. He shouted himself hoarse, and then went on in dumb show while the hubbub and clamour grew louder and louder. Then all was silence for a

moment; the horses had started, and the running fire of shouts that grew nearer and nearer, and the thunder of the horses' hoofs, mingled in one overpowering volley of sound with the inarticulate cries of the whole multitude as the struggling mass of horses rushed past like a whirlwind.

It was all over, and the mare had won. Tregoes assured himself of this fact, and then sank upon the turf in a dead faint from fatigue, excitement, and revulsion of feeling.

#### CHAPTER XIII. A TRIP TO NORMANDY.

THE "Atalanta" and her passengers cruised along the coast of France for several weeks. They visited St. Michael's Mount, the rival of their own Cornish mount; they passed along the iron coast so like its opposite neighbour; they made enquiries as to wreck and relics that might have been washed ashore, for Captain Bill was strong in the theory of a current across the Channel which might drive fragments of a wreck or human bodies from one coast to the other. On this head, however, they learnt nothing. In the first light of dawn they sighted the cliffs that bound the entrance to the Seine, and the coast of France showed like a cloud in the horizon. The moon still glimmered palely in the west, while in the east the clouds were all aglow where the ruddy sun flashed his beams through their chinks and crevices, tinging the foaming crests of the waves with a delicate rosy hue. Then a white sail flutters into sight—it is the pilot-boat, and the pilot is soon on board. The white, shining chalk-cliffs give place to others of ruddy hue, the hills part, and the wide estuary of the Seine opens out. Havre is visible on one hand on its low shelf of land, with its forest of masts and long lines of white houses with their green jealousies; and Honfleur on the other side, quaintly outlined on its low red cliffs. Then the spire of Honfleur shows over the green prairies on the left.

"We are just right for the marée," says the pilot, as the signal-balls on the jetty at Havre fly up one after the other; for when the tide comes it comes with a rush. The rods that mark the channel bend and quiver with its force, and it pours over shoals and sand-banks in a mighty torrent.

The wind is fair, and the yacht speeds merrily along; the hills approach, and then open out as the river assumes the appear-

ance of a wide and placid lake, into which run bold headlands and wooded bluffs, with the old Castle of Tancarville rising boldly over white cliffs.

Beauty and the Admiral were on deck by this time, watching the varied scene as they swept along. As they approached a bend in the river a pleasant-looking little town came in sight, with such a cheerful, riant aspect in the autumnal sunshine, that they were almost tempted to end their voyage then and there. Neat cafés and auberges fronted the quay; there was a charming old church tower; and low-wooded hills rose behind, which left only just standing room for the little cluster of houses that formed the town of Quillebeuf. But the water was still rough and lumpy, and the sight of three solid-looking men seated in a very small boat, with a very small boy at the oars pulling out to meet them, excited Beauty's fears for their safety. But no sooner were they alongside than the three solid-looking men swarmed up the yacht's side with the agility of monkeys; three great round canvas bags were tossed up after them; and the sea-going pilot, with a hasty adieu to those on board, sprang into the boat. The three solid men were pilots, one of whom was charged with the navigation of the yacht, while the other two were on pleasure bent, or, perhaps, on business up the river.

With the two disengaged pilots Beauty at once entered into talk. Oh yes, they knew Monsieur de St. Croix very well. Before long his Château would be in sight. But the river now took a wide sweep to the left, and the yacht lay presently almost becalmed under massive chalk cliffs, while on the other side a belt of pasture-land was sprinkled with willows and tall poplars, with the dark background of a weird and solemn-looking forest. Further on the cliffs broke away into a wooded gorge, out of which stretched park-like glades, bordered by heavy masses of timber, and crowned by the massive red-brick front of the Château of Bellefond.

It was quite evident that the yacht had been sighted from the Château, and that the arrival of her passengers was awaited. A carriage was drawn up on the quay of the little village that stretched along the river embankment. The Count himself was seen to push off from the quay in the village ferry-boat as the yacht came to an anchor and swung round with the tide. He was soon on board, full of expressions



of welcome and of congratulations on the successful termination of the voyage, and he soon found an opportunity to assure Ethel that he hoped for full success in her cause.

"Welcome to Bellefond!" he cried, "which I hope you may soon learn to love as I do."

The road to the Château wound gradually up the hillside through the leafy shade, and then passed between handsome iron gates, once profusely gilded but now rather rusted and tarnished, and so led up to a fine gravelled terrace, from which there was a grand panoramic view of the river, winding below and disappearing among the distant hills, with the country on the other side, bounded by the dark forest.

Madame Bertrand, in a charming costume, was waiting there to receive her guests, with the white-haired General in attendance—a fine, soldierly figure. She embraced Ethel affectionately, but the latter detected something strained in her greeting. General and Admiral were already on friendly terms, and they disappeared together to visit some pointer pups, on which the General required the unbiassed judgment of an English expert. Madame Bertrand and the Count proposed to show Ethel all the charming prospects that could be commanded from the different points of view; but in the course of their rambles Madame Bertrand, who had hung back a little, while Ethel and the Count conversed gaily together, admonished by a commanding glance from the Count, contrived some excuse to leave them for awhile.

The Count led the way to a pretty little pavilion that overlooked the river, and, after descanting on the prospect for a moment, suddenly became earnest and impressive. Taking his seat beside Ethel on the low rustic bench, he besought her attention while he revealed to her certain facts which must, for the present, be an entire secret between them. The Count's story was artfully prepared; it possessed the elements of truth, even though it did not tell all the truth, and it had the advantage of showing him in the most favourable and disinterested aspect.

Briefly, what Ethel learnt was this. Impressed with the likeness between her and the ancestral portrait, the Count had pursued his enquiries unremittingly, and had discovered that the daughter of the Duc de St. Croix, his uncle, had married an Englishman. That the marriage had been discovered by her father, and con-

sequently annulled. That Ethel herself was the daughter of this marriage, and that her father and mother were lost on the coast of Cornwall. The proofs of all this were ready to his hand—he would produce them or suppress them, according to Ethel's verdict in the cause. For himself, he had been so deeply impressed with the cruelty of depriving a child of her natural rights, that he had consulted the highest authorities on the matter. The question he had put was this: Are there any means of restoring the child of this marriage to her natural rights? The reply was, yes. The marriage having been celebrated in good faith, and a child having been born, that child might assert her rights under the French Code. It would then depend entirely on the head of the family whether he pleaded the formal annulment of the marriage, or assented to the claim of natural right.

"In that happy, and yet very unhappy position am I, dear Mademoiselle," said the Count, in an impressive voice. "It is I who am the head of the family, it is I who will not only acknowledge but pursue your rights, and not merely your barren rights to call yourself a daughter of the house of St. Croix, but your right to all that your grandfather the Duc possessed. Look around you, Mademoiselle; all that you see is yours—these woods, these fields, this old ancestral Château."

Ethel now looked around with a proud, elated glance. It was like a fairy tale, and yet it must be true. The Count would never deceive her on a point so contrary to his own interests; what candour, what disinterestedness there was about the man! Here was indeed a hero, and she turned her eyes from the extended prospect to rest them upon the features of the Count. There he sat as if exhausted and dejected, his head resting in his hands, his gaze cast mournfully on the ground. And then Beauty remembered how he had spoken just now, and had often spoken before of that dear Bellefond that he loved so much. And all that she guessed he would lose.

"But you!" cried Beauty, full of sympathy and gratitude, "how will it be with you?"

"I should be poor, of course," replied the Count proudly, "but my honour will be safe. And I am not too old to begin the world again."

Beauty held out her hand with impulsive action. She meant to signify her gratitude, her appreciation of his high-

mindfulness, her resolution that he should not suffer by his heroic conduct. But the Count seized the proffered hand, covered it with kisses, and threw himself on the ground before her.

"Dearest Beauty," he cried, "you return to me a thousandfold what I have resigned. It has been the desire of my heart ever since I have known you to win you for my own."

Ethel was overcome with emotion. She had not dreamt of such an avowal. And how could she refuse a man so generous, so devoted? And yet poor Donald! It would break his heart were she faithless. But then Donald's mother. The thought of her almost made her welcome the Count's devotion. And here were the moments passing, the Count still at her feet, and her indecision almost equivalent to surrender.

But a stealthy footstep had approached the summer-house, and a woman wrung with torture and despair was an unobserved spectator of the scene. She could bear it no longer, and hurried forward with enraged aspect.

"Victor," she cried, "is it thus you keep the faith you have sworn to me; is it thus you reward my sacrifices? And for you, Mademoiselle, is this the maidenly conduct of an English girl? But a few hours my guest, do you intrigue with one whom you knew to be mine?"

The Count sprang to his feet and interposed between Ethel and Helen, dominating the rage of the latter, as it seemed, by the mere power of his glance.

"Helen," he said calmly, "address what reproaches you like to me, but for this young lady she is my affianced. You are suffering from one of your nervous attacks, my dear Helen, and hardly know what you are saying. Let me conduct you to the house after you have offered your apologies to Mademoiselle."

Madame Bertrand, the crisis of her passion having passed, seemed quite subdued by the Count's influence. She murmured some incoherent words of excuse as she took the Count's proffered arm.

"Await my return, Mademoiselle," said the Count, with an imploring glance.

But Ethel, who had almost lost the use of her tongue, so overwhelmed was she with the reproaches of her friend—who could no more be a friend—hurried away the moment the pair had disappeared, intending to seek for the Admiral and ask him to take her away at once from the

house. But as she moved, reflection made her pause. How could she explain the insult she had received from her hostess? For the Admiral was too fiery-tempered to be trusted with the details of the affair. No, she must retain the secret within her own bosom. They must remain at the Château that night, and she would persuade the Admiral to leave the next day. In the meantime she would contrive to let the Count know that he had mistaken her feelings, and that, grateful as she was for his devotion to her cause, she could not reward him in the way he desired.

The Count, however, had no intention of losing the advantage he had gained. Ethel had not repulsed him, she had not protested when he called her his affianced; she was pledged to him, in fact; and even if Helen's avowals had shocked her a little, they were not likely to be a permanent stumbling block in his way. Altogether, he was quite satisfied with the progress of events. He should win a great deal with very little risk, for even were he to lose Bellefond, it would be more of a loss to his creditors than himself. And when he received a telegram announcing that the French mare had won the Cesarewitch at Newmarket, he felt that his star was altogether in the ascendant. He would now keep up the rôle of disinterestedness and magnanimity till the Vavasor estate was fairly within his grasp.

The Count searched the grounds everywhere for Ethel, but without success. He saw nothing of her till they met at dinner, a meal which passed off in a dull and leaden manner. Helen performed her duties as hostess in an inert and lifeless way, but the air about her was evidently charged with electricity. At any moment the storm might burst. The two elderly gentlemen conversed on shells and torpedoes, and the elements of destruction generally. The Count, now with an air of tender gallantry towards Ethel, and of profound defiance for Madame Bertrand, played his part perfectly; so well, indeed, that when she retired to rest, Ethel had begun to doubt whether it were worth while any longer to resist his influence.

#### CHAPTER XIV. BY A WOMAN'S HAND.

In the meantime, the yacht lay in the river below the Château, with Captain Bill in almost sole charge. He had let most of the men go ashore, where they were

amusing themselves at a little auberge, a resort of pilots and fishermen, who also seemed to find amusement in the company of the English sailors, judging from the peals of laughter that issued from the open doors and windows of the house. The night was dark and quite calm, but lit up now and then by distant flashes of lightning. It was dead, low water in the river, which was still and motionless, as if asleep, reflecting the beams of lighthouses and beacons in long pencils of light. It was about nine o'clock, the hour at which Captain Bill had been told the tide would turn. "Look out for the marée," had been the last words of the pilot in his broken English, as he took leave of the yacht, "let her have plenty of chain."

Captain Bill laughed to himself at the notion of a Frenchman giving him advice about his ship, as if people did not know what the tide was. As the hour approached, there was clanking of chains, and a general movement among the boats by the quay, which dropped down the river one by one. Some of the boatmen hailed the yacht, and shouted out words ending in "le flot!"

"Ay, ay," cried Captain Bill, "let it flow. I want a bit more water under my keel."

Then there began a roaring sound in the distance, which the Captain could not quite make out; a noise as if a menagerie were let loose, and were scampering bodily up the river. Strange sea sounds the Captain was used to; he had heard the billows going many a day and night on his own coast, as the surf dashed among the hollow jagged rocks; but there were no rocks here, except lumps of chalk, and there was no surf either. But still the noise increased, and then the reflections on the water began strangely to swirl and quiver. And then the Captain could hardly believe his eyes as he saw a dark wall of water stretching right across the river with a curl of surf along the bank that shone strangely white out of the gloom. The Captain now rushed to the bits to let out the chain; but it was too late, the yacht rose upon the great tidal wave and was hurried bodily forward. Something must give, so the chain snapped with the sudden strain, and away went the "Atalanta" anyhow up the river, on the top of the roaring, raging tide.

As the Captain observed afterwards, it was nearly a case of shipwreck in port, but by superhuman exertions single-handed he managed to let go the best bower, and

after awhile that held the yacht, and after twirling about for awhile in the corkscrew waves that followed the big rush, she rested once more tranquilly on the surface of the river, now bank-high, and full of currents and eddies. Presently the sailors came along in a boat they had chartered, shouting loudly, and wondering what had become of their ship—and in a couple of hours or so the tide turned again, and Captain Bill dropped down to his old anchorage, a sadder and a wiser man. Wouldn't the Admiral storm next day at his losing his anchor?

"Is there any more of this humbugging work going on to-night?" demanded Captain Bill wrathfully of those ashore. But they could not understand him, or make him understand them. And the Captain, who was determined not to be caught napping again, paced the deck till far into the night. He saw the lights in the Château above go out one by one, till, at last, only a pair of the windows were left illuminated. But in these two the light seemed to grow brighter and brighter, with a quite dazzling radiance. Then adjoining windows began to glow, too, with a dull, lurid hue, and then a tongue of flame burst forth and darted up the wall and curled around the eaves. All this had happened in less time than it takes to tell it, and before the Captain could arouse his men and bring a boat-load of them ashore, a great volume of red flame rose crackling above the trees.

By the time the sailors reached the house, the whole front was in a blaze. Some of the terrified inmates had escaped, and were gathered on the terrace in front, women servants running about and wringing their hands, and men as profitably employed, darting to and fro with empty buckets, and frantically asking each other for water.

Where was Ethel? The Admiral, on the first alarm, had made for her room, and had brought her out in safety, as he thought. But it was not Ethel whom he had rescued, it was Ernestine, Madame Bertrand's maid. She weepingly explained that her mistress had sent her to Miss Langford's room to beg her to come to see Madame Bertrand before she slept. Miss Langford had complied, and she, Ernestine, had remained there to assist Mademoiselle to undress when she returned. The fire had evidently commenced in Madame Bertrand's room, and now it had communicated with the grand staircase which,

with all its carved old woodwork, had burned like tinder. There was now no access to the room from without, and it seemed too evident that those within had perished. The General raved and tore his hair. The Admiral offered a hundred pounds for a ladder. But Captain Bill meanwhile had clambered up to the roof, and having secured the end of a coil of rope to a chimney-stack, had lowered himself to one of the windows, broken a way in, and disappeared.

Presently a cry arose from the lookers-on, as the Captain was discovered standing on the sill of the window holding in his arms some senseless form. The rope was not long enough to reach the ground, but a ladder had now been procured, and a dozen eager arms aided the Captain to descend with his helpless burden.

"I've got the right one this time, Admiral," said the Captain, as he resigned the care of Ethel to her guardian.

The Count, who slept in the other wing, had only just been aroused, and now appeared on the terrace for the first time. And at this moment another female form appeared at the window from which Ethel had been rescued.

"Victor, Victor!" cried a piercing voice. "Save me, save me!"

The white-haired General rushed to the ladder, but the Count was there before him.

"Pardon me, this is my work," he said. And he ran nimbly up the ladder, and swung himself up by the rope to the window. A great wave of smoke and flame burst forth at the moment the Count disappeared. A portion of the roof fell in with a loud crash, and red columns of fire went spouting up to the skies. The wall swayed to and fro, and finally fell inwards, quenching the flame for a moment, and sending up a great shower of angry sparks. A loud groan arose from those assembled, for it was seen that the Count and Madame Bertrand must have perished together.

After that the flames burnt on at their will till the pompiers arrived in the bravery of their brass helmets from the neighbouring town, and the mayor of the commune appeared in his tricoloured scarf to make a "procès verbal" of the affair. But by that time the Château of Bellefond was a mass of smoking ruins.

Some kind of formal inquiry was made as to the fatal fire at the Château Bellefond. The juge de paix appeared on the scene, with his greffier, and Ethel was invited to

relate what she knew of the occurrence. That was not very much. She had visited Madame Bertrand, at her invitation, before retiring to rest. Their conversation had turned on family affairs. Madame Bertrand had become indignant that her guest would not make some promise that she exacted, and had locked her in her—Madame's—dressing-room. Ethel, more indignant than terrified, had placed herself on a sofa, and, overcome with fatigue, had fallen asleep. She awoke to find the room filled with suffocating smoke, and knew nothing more till she came to her senses upon the terrace in front of the Château. Captain Pentecost, whose name was the despair of the greffier, confirmed Ethel's statement. It was he who had burst open the door and rescued Mademoiselle. As to the rest there were only the smoking ruins to testify.

The general opinion of the neighbourhood perhaps came pretty near the truth. The relations between the Count and Madame Bertrand had long been the subject of gossip. It was also widely known, and the Count had himself confirmed the intelligence, that he expected a visit from a young English heiress, of fabulous wealth, and her friends, whose engagement to the Count would probably be shortly announced. The Count was well known to be hopelessly embarrassed, but the report of his marriage had induced his creditors to be lenient with him. Nothing must be done, it was well understood, to disturb such a satisfactory settlement of his affairs. But there was much speculation as to the course Madame Bertrand would take, and sinister predictions, founded on a knowledge of her passionate and vindictive character, had not been wanting. And the general impression was that the ruin of the Château might be traced to a woman's hand.

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### WHERE THE SUNBEAMS FELL.

SOMEWHAT shaken and depressed by the catastrophe she had witnessed, and so nearly shared in, Ethel returned with the Admiral to Polpernac. The yacht was laid up for the winter, and the Captain assumed the command of a trawling cutter till the "Atalanta" should once more be put in commission. The Admiral had rewarded his services to Ethel on the night of the fire by presenting him with the fee-simple of the cottage and an acre or two of



ground occupied by his mother, old Dolly Pentecost. The Captain was grateful, but did not seem at all easy in his mind. His thoughts tormented him, he said; and he was fearful that he did not deserve any recompense at all, unless it were a few weeks' hard labour in Bodmin Gaol. But he could not be induced to explain himself any further, and his utterances were set down to his excessive modesty, and to the shame he felt at having nearly lost his ship in port.

In her last stormy interview with Madame Bertrand, Ethel had been a good deal enlightened as to the Count's real character, and she was now doubtful as to whether his communications as to her origin were anything more than an artfully concocted tale to serve some purpose that she could not guess at. Whether or not this was the case, all proofs of the story that the Count might have possessed had perished with him. However, as she considered that the seal of secrecy had been removed by the Count's death, she told the Admiral everything, and he, struck by certain probabilities in the story, sent all the particulars to Miss Vavasor. That lady was not to be shaken, however, in her confidence that her brother and his wife were still alive, and that they could not therefore have been shipwrecked in Kyloe Cove. And this confidence was based chiefly upon the mysterious head from Borneo. Here was a characteristic missive from her brother received within the year, and it was absurd to confront her with a story of what happened fifteen years ago, or more. Still Miss Vavasor expressed a desire that Ethel should visit her when she came to London for the season.

Christmas passed quietly enough at Polpernac. Laurence Tregoes was away, and his servants had no idea where he was. He had not been seen since the early part of October, and his absence began to cause a little uneasiness. Miss Langford began to fear that he had fallen into some entanglement, and that her favourite project of a match between him and Ethel might be interfered with.

And then when spring came tardily and coldly enough, with frost and ice, and skating in the parks on St. Patrick's Day, Ethel paid her promised visit to Miss Vavasor, in her comfortable, old-fashioned house, in Hertford Street, Mayfair. The Admiral could not be induced to accompany her; he had an invincible repugnance, it seemed, to any personal inter-

course with Miss Vavasor, but he was glad that Ethel should go away and enjoy herself after her trying experiences. And enjoy herself she did, for Miss Vavasor, although outwardly proud and cold, had a very warm heart for a friend, and such Ethel soon became to the lonely woman. They went about everywhere—to theatres, races, parties, entertainments. And once or twice they had Donald for an escort, who had crossed the Channel and run up to London on hearing that his sweetheart was there. And, in Donald's person, Miss Vavasor overcame her repugnance to the Grahams. She liked a handsome, spirited young fellow, and Donald just fell in with her views.

And Miss Vavasor confessed to Ethel that her dislike to the Grahams was confined principally to her sister. It might be very unchristian, but she could not help it. And Ethel agreed with her so sincerely in this dislike that here was another bond of sympathy between them. The origin of this dislike, Miss Vavasor admitted, was that her sister had taken away from her the man she loved best in the world—out of pure mischief, for she never cared for him herself.

"And I never could bear to hear of you, my dear," said Miss Vavasor to Ethel, "because you were called Ethel after her; but when I heard accidentally that your real working name was Beauty I relented at once, and Beauty you shall be to the end of the chapter."

But the season ended; was assassinated rather by the general election; and Miss Vavasor took Beauty down to Cowes, where the Admiral's yacht was lying.

"I should like to have a peep at the Lieutenant, Beauty," said Miss Vavasor, as the yacht's boat, with Captain Bill in the stern sheets, came to fetch Beauty from the pier. "Do you think he'd mind—meaning the Admiral—Lieutenant he was when I saw him last—such a smart little gunboat, he had. Well, never mind, my dear."

Miss Vavasor even shed a few tears over Beauty as she blessed her and bade her good-bye. "When Walter comes home, and I am relieved of all this bother, you and I and Donald will go round the world together."

Beauty said she would not mind, and they parted with mutual sorrow. But the Admiral's delight at seeing her again was very pleasant to witness, and although he pretended to be profoundly indifferent to Miss Vavasor's movements, he managed to

ask a good many questions about her nevertheless.

The Admiral had been enjoying a few weeks of regattas and sailing matches, but he was now anxious to get home. And, as soon as *Beauty* was on board, the "*Atalanta*" made sail for the west. Nothing remarkable occurred on the voyage, the weather being of the pea-jacket and south-wester character, and in due course the yacht anchored in Polpernac Bay, with the familiar coast-line in full view, and the tower of St. Kyloe on its lonely hill. But the tide was the lowest perhaps ever remembered by the oldest fisherman. White sands and dark rocks lay shimmering in the tempered sunshine, and the fisher children were scampering about where oftentimes ships had ridden at anchor. Hence, there were all kinds of odd finds—old stocks and flukes of anchors, a mass of rusted incrustations that had once perhaps been a cannon, and other unconsidered trifles, the broken playthings of the mighty deep.

But, most wonderful of all, the rock known as *Kyloe Beak* stood high and dry upon the sands, a thing never known before, and that might not occur for centuries.

"Oh! let us go to the top of *Kyloe Beak*," cried *Beauty*, "we shall never have such a chance again." The Admiral nodded assent, and presently they were landed on the sands at the foot of the rock, from which one could now walk dry-shod right up *Kyloe Cove*.

And then they saw Mr. Seabright coming down to the spot, who started off at a run when he saw them, and met them breathless but delighted. "Of course, we must all climb up the *Beak*," he cried. "Oh, we shan't want ropes and chains, the ascent is easy enough, the only difficulty is in landing, and that we are spared. It is five-and-twenty years since I was on the *Beak*, but I don't suppose it's much changed."

The parson led the way, and *Beauty* followed, while the Admiral, followed by Captain Bill, brought up the rear. But, just as they began to climb, they heard the shrill voice of Dolly Pentecost, who had driven down with her donkey and cart. "Don't ee go up there," she cried, "you'll all be killed if ye go up there. Willum, Willum"—to her son, whom she recognised as of the party—"stop the gentlefolk, they mustn't goo."

"I can't help it, mother," said Captain Bill, shaking his head mournfully; "what's

meant to come out will come out in spite of all."

When they had clambered to the top of the rock there was nothing to be seen but a smooth platform of green sward, as big as a moderate-sized room, but a ray of sunshine burst out for a moment and rested upon the sward, revealing a patch much greener and brighter than the rest.

"It is a grave," cried the parson, "an unhallowed grave."

"Ah—yes, yes!" cried Captain Bill, "it is that has tormented me more than anything; no one has said a prayer over her. There she lies, poor thing! Say a prayer over her, parson—say a prayer, and you, Miss, kneel down too, kneel down, for yon's your mother's grave."

The parson sank upon his knees. *Beauty* threw herself upon the ground by his side. She sobbed, she wept, carried away by uncontrollable emotion. The sight of this solitary grave seemed to unlock all the sealed fountains of her heart.

"Where the matter is," said Captain Bill doggedly, as the party gathered round him for an explanation, "I'm a scoundrel and a rogue as ought to be hanged; I knowed all about it, but I wouldn't say. Mother put a spell upon me; she can't help it too, poor creetur! and don't you be hard upon her. But where it was, on the morning after the wreck, don't you know, Admiral, the tide was down pretty nigh as low as it be now, and mother, groping about among the rocks, as was her custom after a storm, saw something washing about in the surf at the foot of the *Kyloe Beak*. She called me, as I was at home just then, and we managed to get across to the *Beak*, and what we found was a poor human corpse—a beautiful lady she had been, with lovely rings on her fingers, and her neck and arms hung with gold and jewels. Well, what we did—I don't say it was right, but it was nat'ral—was to carry the poor thing up *Kyloe Beak*, and bury it in the mould at top. The ring and things we kept. But that lady was Miss *Beauty's* mother, I know. How do I know?—you must ask mother about that. But stop," cried Captain Bill, struck with a sudden notion; "come along, parson, you and I, and let's run for it, so as to get home before mother does."

The parson and Captain Bill scrambled the rocks and raced for the old woman's cottage, and, as they reached it, they saw her coming out of the door, with something hidden under her red cloak.

"Drop it, mother, drop it," cried the Captain; "parson's beaten you fair, mother; his spell is stronger than yourn."

"Why, what is it you've got here, mother?" said the parson sternly. "Come, tell us all you know, and give up what you've kept, and nobody will say a word about the gold and precious stones."

Old Dolly was too much terrified to offer any resistance, and yielded up a casket of enamelled steel of Eastern workmanship, to which was attached a chain of the same workmanship.

"That was round her waist, poor thing," said the Captain, "and we found the key of it in her purse, and the papers all carefully wrapped up in oiled silks; and now you shall open it before the Admiral. I can identify what it held."

The contents of the casket put an end to doubts about Beauty's parentage, and about the fate of Walter Vavasor and his wife. The first document was the will of Jeanne de St. Croix, otherwise Mrs. Walter Vavasor, reciting, that in view of the hostile action of her father, she bequeathed all her rights under her succession to her only daughter, Beatrice Ethel, named after her two aunts. With this was a diary, containing short notes of the adventures of Walter Vavasor and his wife, on their voyage home in a large sea-going yacht they had purchased. They had broken up their home in the Pacific, and returned by way of Japan, and spent some time in Borneo. In the latter country the yacht had been attacked by a pirate proa, which had been beaten off and the chief-  
tain killed by Walter's prowess. A friendly native chief, who had shared in the fight, had cut off the pirate's head, and insisted on its being preserved after the Dyak fashion as a trophy.

"When he should come to the point of death," said the half-civilised Dyak, "he would order the head to be sent to his English friend."

"Then," said the parson, after the papers had been examined and verified, "it was some dialect of the Malay or Indo Malay group of languages that our little Beauty used to puzzle us with."

#### CHAPTER XVI. COASTING IRELAND.

THE proof was too clear to admit of doubt. Miss Vavasor would have to abandon the cherished dream of her life, and console herself by the companionship of her brother's daughter. As for the Admiral,

a feeling of blank disappointment and discouragement succeeded the first excitement of the discovery. He would lose his little Beauty, and what could compensate him for the loss? But they will have one more cruise together, he vows; they will run across to Dublin and beat up Donald in his quarters, and carry him off to Solway Frith, and rouse up the old Astrologer in his tower, and see if he can make a fitting horoscope for Beauty, for they know all about it now—day, hour, minute, even second—with the latitude of the place of birth which the poor mother had put down in her diary, with prescient thoughtfulness.

And so one fine day, as the summer was waning, the "Atalanta" was seen in rather foggy weather rounding the Longships light, and the rocky sullen coast that stretches to the extreme Land's End. Then they had something like Atlantic weather, blowing high and blowing low, with a sea running that turned everything in the yacht upside down. Actually there was a whale spouting in the distance, and great ships seemed to gasp as they were struck by the gushing billows. Altogether it was a relief to make Carnsore Point and put the bulk of Ireland between themselves and the Atlantic rollers, and the yacht coasted quickly along Wexford shore—how grim, how lonely, with hardly a village or habitation to break the monotony of black rocks and bleak hills! But now the scene changes, the hills assume more gracious forms; white clouds hang on their summits. It is Wales, continued from the other side of the Channel, the same blue mountains, the same noble and rugged outlines, with grand mountains on a small scale. But still how lonely it is—hardly a wreath of smoke to be seen, till at last, as Bray Head is reached, they came upon the conventional sea-side season, with bathing-machines and yachts and boats sprinkling the waters.

At Kingstown our voyagers landed, and went by rail to Dublin, and here, at the Westland Row Station, a most unexpected sight presented itself. The Borderers were evacuating the city with bag and baggage, and with all the honours of war, bands playing, rifles trailed, and the face of everybody, from the Colonel to the drummer-boy, beaming with satisfaction. The Admiral soon signalled out Donald, who was wild with delight at the sight. Leave! Of course he could get leave! The Colonel was so charmed with leaving Ireland that

he would give as much leave as anybody wanted.

And so, with Donald and company, they dashed here and there on outside cars—the one charm of the Irish metropolis—through Phoenix Park, and all round.

“What a commonplace looking city!” was Beauty’s verdict. The houses, the very best of them, just dead walls with square holes cut for windows. Quite English, you know, but of the very worst type of English house architecture. And yet what a magnificent site for a grand and noble capital! The lovely bay; the river running into the very midst of the city; the hills that look down upon it—all give the place a kind of natural nobility or distinction; and if you will mix a bit of Hyde Park with Epping Forest, and throw in the mountains of Wales as a background, you will have an idea of the Phoenix Park.

The “Atalanta” left the square-cut harbour of Kingstown before the gallant Borderers were all embarked upon the steamer that was to take them to Holyhead; and Donald’s comrades cheered the yacht as she flew out before the wind. The young man himself had gladly exchanged the stiff regimental scarlet for the easy blue serge of the seafaring life; and the Admiral, instead of growing paler as they flew—as in the old song—only got browner and ruddier. Beauty herself had assumed a warm, brown tan, but that was a complexion that became her better than milk of roses.

“If we run a straight course,” said Captain Bill, who stood higher than ever in the Admiral’s favour, “we shall hit the Caul of Man.”

#### CHAPTER XVII. THE ISLE OF MAN.

THE wind blew fair and square from the west, and in the early morning, with the hills of Ireland still in sight, Man rose like a cloud from the sea, her purple hills rising over the misty rim of the sea-girt isle. In a few hours Calf Island was lying to windward, with wild and rugged outline, about which the sea-birds were screaming in grand conclave; and Spanish Head opened out bold and threatening as when the strong ships of the Armada broke to pieces beneath its cruel cliffs. But then the aspect of the island changed, and smiled with green fields and rich enclosures sloping towards the sea. Then the yacht coasted Poolwash Bay and Port St. Mary nestling under the bold hills. Then she

stood out to round the rugged spikes of Langness; and the party on board had hit a glimpse of the old grey castle town with the castle towering above. Derby Haven they passed, the old landing-place of the Stanleys, Kings of Man; and the rugged head of Douglas Bay appeared in sight, and the bay itself opened out its graceful curve with bright and many-coloured fields and white houses shining out of rich plantations. And in Douglas Bay they lay for the night, and paid a flying visit to the island, where the old town of Douglas lies snugly under the headland, while the new town spreads out terrace over terrace along the open shore.

With morning light they sailed again, the mountains of Cumberland now in sight, and the sloping shores of Solway, with fields and dells outlined like a map in the clear morning air. The rugged hills of Galloway hemmed them in on the north, and rugged cliffs and promontories alternated with stretches of sands and glimpses of green pastures. The nearer they approached the coast of Cumberland the more anxious grew Donald and Captain Bill. The one was anxious about the navigation, the fierce tides, and plentiful array of shoals and sand-banks; the other was speculating as to the mutual impression that was likely to be made between Beauty and his own people.

Captain Bill had decided, on consultation with the Admiral, that Sillioth was the safest port to make for; a place, not very interesting in itself, but furnished with a railway that would take our friends to their destination.

“Now, we shall see,” said the Admiral, as the three, who were very good company in spite of the adage, made their way to the station, “Now, we shall see if the art of the Astrologer has made him aware of our approach.”

#### CHAPTER XVIII. THE ASTROLOGER’S TOWER.

##### BEAUTY’S STAR ASCENDANT.

THE trains run at no great speed thereabouts, and it was several hours before the travellers reached the station for Mousehold Tower, in a rather bleak moorland district, that was watered, however, by brisk and pleasant streams that seemed to promise trout. As the district was wild and lonely it was pleasant to find a well-appointed carriage waiting at the station, the driver of which greeted Donald with respectful familiarity.



"They're all expecting you at the Tower, Master Donald, and the young leddie and all. We shall have gay doings up there by all I hear."

"That scores one for the Astrologer," said Donald, laughing.

The bleak moors gave place to green fields and leafy groves as the carriage approached its destination, but still bare and bleak, over the trees rose Mousehold Knowe and its crowning tower. The house below was cosy and sheltered enough, and its green lawns and plantations contrasted pleasantly with the bareness of the neighbouring moors. Beauty had come prepared to dislike Mrs. Graham, but she was disarmed by the cordiality of her reception.

In manner, Mrs. Graham was all milk and honey; she could be savage at a distance, and could write scathing letters, but she was too buxom and ease-loving to quarrel with those about her.

The Astrologer soon made his appearance, tall, and thin, and stooping, with an eagle nose and small, piercing eyes.

"That's a splendid nativity you have sent me, Langford," he cried, hardly giving himself time for the conventional greetings.

"I've worked it all out with excellent results. If the subject has recovered the perils that threatened her in her fifth and nineteenth years, she passes into an aspect of the heavens altogether bright and propitious. In the words of the poet:

Those about her  
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour."

"That is all very well," said the Admiral, "but a little indefinite; what we want to know is, whom she is going to marry, and what will be her dower?"

"She shall marry Donald," cried the Astrologer, with sudden inspiration, taking Beauty in his arms and kissing her. "And for her tocher she shall have Mousehold Knowe when these old bones are laid to rest."

But there is very much besides the distant reversion of the Border tower to gild the nuptials of Donald and Beauty. Miss Vavasor is only too anxious that the young people shall come and claim their own—Beauty's own, that is, for Miss Vavasor always insists that it is in her own right that she is to take possession of Coningsberg. And that will be enough for them without troubling the French property, which is not likely to be worth claiming. For creditors have seized it, lawyers have attached it, and it is to be

sold by decree of the Court, and there will probably be nothing left of the purchase-money when the litigation is finished.

But Beauty is troubled in her mind about the Admiral. If she and Donald live at Coningsberg how dull and lonely he will be at Polpernac, for Miss Langford, estimable soul, does not count for much in the way of company. But a bright thought strikes her.

"I wonder, dear," she cries, addressing the Admiral when they are alone together on their way to the Tower, "I wonder you did not fall in love with Miss Vavasor rather than her sister."

The Admiral looked astonished.

"With Beatrice!" he cried; "I should as soon have thought of falling in love with the stars of Heaven."

"But if you could get one of them down," suggested Beauty.

"Beatrice was too lofty to come down," said the Admiral.

"All the same," murmured Beauty, as if to herself, "I know that she was awfully fond of one Lieutenant Langford."

The Admiral blushed, yes, positively blushed.

"You are talking nonsense, Beauty," he said.

But the words sank into his mind nevertheless, and Beauty thinks that before long she will bring matters nicely round.

And then one morning who should turn up at the Tower but Laurence Tregoes, looking very pale and wan, with his hair cut short and altogether much altered.

"Why, where do you come from, Laurence?" was Beauty's greeting, who was the first to meet him. "You have been in prison," she added severely, with a glance at his bare neck.

"Brain fever," said Tregoes; "found myself in hospital with sixpence in my pocket, and had just won three thousand pounds."

"It was ill-gotten, Laurence, and you are well rid of it."

"But it was taken care of by a betting-man, and I've got it all back again, and now I can afford to marry."

"Marry the betting-man's daughter, Laurence," cried Beauty cruelly. "Here, Uncle Hector," she cried, as the Astrologer approached from his tower, "another realised prediction."

"Oh, tut tut, that is nothing, my dear!" cried the Astrologer, "why, there is a revolution in this morning's papers that I distinctly foretold. In fact, I am very busy,

my dear, with a synopsis, showing my forecast for the year, and how it agrees with what actually happened and, with your permission, my dear, I will go back to my Table of Events."

### THE COUNT'S STORY.

It is a few, only a few years ago, when the curious adventure I shall relate happened to Signor Antonio Lerini, of whom I have no doubt often spoken, as I heard much of him at various times from one who knew him well. He was fond of adventures, and, as we all know, adventures come to the adventurous. The passage in his life which I am about to describe is known but to few. He always considered it as the most trying of all the episodes he had ever encountered; and, while some may be disposed to censure part of his conduct, yet great allowance must be made for a man of his temperament, and for the circumstances in which he was placed.

It was just at this time of the year that he found himself at —: I will not mention the name of the place, it will be better not to do so; but it was one of the few spots where play is still to be found; found openly, that is, for it was never so common as now in a concealed way—at least, so I hear.

Antonio had devised a new, bold plan for the tables, but this required a confederate, and he had one. Doctor Franke was the fittest man in the world for the office. Cool, ready, quick-witted, yet stolid and dull in aspect, he was a marvel. Where he had practised medicine was not known, nor from what country he came; but he had learnt much that is not generally taught, or if taught is not spoken of; and, in order that they might be of equal help to each other in their plans, which were rather extended, Dr. Franke communicated some of this knowledge to his friend.

Although I have introduced the gaming saloon, it was not there where the adventure befel Signor Lerini. At the very outset of their plan, Dr. Franke was seen by an officer who professed to recognise him, and declared he was an escaped convict. If so, it was horribly imprudent for him to venture to a town within the territory where he had been sentenced. He strenuously denied the charge, and named several persons of distinction who would

guarantee his respectability. But these all happened to live in Russia, or the United States of America, and the authorities demanded immediate bail, to about one thousand pounds of English money, before they would relax their hold on him.

He appealed, of course, to Antonio, but there were grave objections to the latter compromising himself; not only had he powerful reasons of his own against any dealings with the police, but in having to deposit this money he would have exhausted his funds. Were the doctor at liberty, all chance of trying the new plan would have been out of the question, as both would have been under a cloud. Besides, the doctor might really be the person asserted, in which case he would undoubtedly have absconded, and Antonio would then have lost this money, which was indispensable to him.

So, as the best thing to be done, he allowed the doctor to be taken away by the officers; indeed, Antonio, who was eminently a man of decision, left the town first, as otherwise there would have arisen a little unpleasantness about some money he held of Franke's towards their bank. This could be of no use to him in prison; but pecuniary relations are always bad things between friends, and it was so now.

I believe the doctor felt highly aggrieved at this, but he could do nothing. Antonio, as a man of decision, lost no time in leaving the neighbourhood, and a chance encounter induced him to settle for a time in a small Italian town which I will call, for prudential reasons, Rosato—'tis not unlike its real name.

This accident was his meeting, in a railway train, with a lady and her daughter, to whom he was able to render some slight service which produced an intimacy. The conversation of this lady, aided by some information obtained from a railway official, decided Antonio on staying at Rosato for a while, at least.

The lady was a widow; her daughter was pretty, and about sixteen years old; the lady was wealthy, but she had an invalid son, which made it awkward for Antonio—I mean for his plans. With the decision to which I have alluded, he had made up his mind to marry either mother or daughter, and a little further investigation at Rosato caused him to select the daughter.

She would be sure to inherit all the mother's property, if this sickly boy should not live, and it was not likely that a

deformed, ailing, puny creature like him would live long; and, in his usual decided style, Antonio resolved that this boy would *not* live long. He was in the care of a nurse who was supposed to be clever in such cases, while his mother and sister lived in a house close by.

Antonio chose the daughter because there was something unpleasant about the death of Madame Dupont's husband—who appeared to have been a Frenchman—he was shot or hung as a rebel; and Antonio wisely decided that he did not want a wife with any doubtful antecedents; he had experience enough of adventure on his own side.

So he set himself to win Maria Dupont, a colourless, uninteresting girl, although moderately good-looking, quite unfitted to appreciate him; so unfitted, indeed, that she hated him, if she ever felt a sentiment so energetic as hate; at any rate, she shrank from him, avoided him, and showed all the dislike which a mean mind entertains for a superior one.

This mattered not to Antonio; he assumed a mesmeric sway over her, and was most assiduous to the mother, who was won at once, thinking there was no one like her new friend, to whom she confided all her business, showing, by the way, that she was much richer than was commonly supposed, while he was most attentive to her sickly son.

It was strange, but this half-imbecile showed the same dislike to the gentleman as his sister had done, and at first could not bear him to be in his sight. I need hardly say that when such a man as Antonio seriously applied himself to please such an ignorant creature, he was sure to succeed. So in a short time Marco—that was the boy's name—had not only conquered his dislike, but looked eagerly for Antonio's coming, and found his chief pleasure in listening to the stories of strange lands and exciting adventures of which his new friend had many to tell.

It would be mere affectation—which no one would despise more than Antonio himself—if I were to conceal for a moment that this gentleman had determined to remove Marco; it was indispensable for his purpose that he should do so, and he felt that no one, judging the matter impartially, could blame him.

There was no doubt that his foolish mother would waste part, perhaps the greater part, of her wealth on this son—and such a son! No one could argue

that he would not be better out of the world than in it; to him it was not a world of pleasure. He had never walked, or stood erect in his life, while his nearest approach to enjoyment was the being carried on a couch into the garden on a spring or summer day, and to lie there listening to the birds twittering, to the rustling of the leaves, and inhaling the scent of the flowers. Such a life as this it would be no inhumanity to extinguish, and the attention paid to the invalid by Antonio in the course of his operations far more than compensated for the necessary severity which closed them.

Here the knowledge gained from his friend, Dr. Franke, proved to be of value. There was no hurry in the matter, indeed it was one of those cases where haste would be ruinous, and although he cared little for the yet undiminished dislike of Maria, having her mother's support, yet he preferred to win her also. It was his pride to conquer, and he took pleasure in watching the struggles of the captive.

Some months passed in this way. Antonio, with his tact and gaiety, became indispensable to the boy, who, Madame Dupont declared and believed, was growing rapidly better under this new and invigorating friendship, while the gentleman was aware that several almost angry arguments had taken place between the mother and daughter about him.

A fête of some kind was to be held in the village, simple, contemptible enough in itself, but of consequence in the eyes of the rustics. There were to be illuminations—Antonio used to laugh when he spoke of them—a few lamps, a few coloured paper lanterns, a few candles, and that was all.

There was to be a dance in the evening, and Marco had been promised that his couch should be carried to the public garden, where he should see all this splendour. Splendour—ha! ha! I cannot myself refrain from a smile when I picture the festa; I have seen the kind of thing so often.

Well, the day arrived. Decked in their best attire the rustics were there, priests, landed proprietors and all, and, of course, the Dupont family. Maria had chosen this afternoon to exhibit a somewhat worse temper than usual. Antonio received a hint from a resident—for he found the expenditure of a crown occasionally, for information, was desirable, and such a sum went a long way there—that the

anticipated presence of some boor, some young farmer, at the fête was the cause of this. She was but an ignorant peasant, in soul, herself.

The festivities began, and, when twilight came, the lamps were lighted, and the dancing commenced. There had been some sort of dancing all day, but this was the grand, the formal business. Marco was there before this time, and delighted; Antonio was continually in attendance on him, until Madame Dupont and Maria arrived, and then, naturally, he had to take charge of them. He was particularly attentive to Maria; his plans were maturing, and he thought it was time to arrange his cards.

He was, I repeat, specially attentive, demonstrative, indeed, in his manner to Maria, while Madame smiled approval, and nodded benignantly at the pair as they passed her in the promenade round the grounds which preceded the ball. Her eyes filled with tears of joy as Antonio stopped and said some trifling jest to Marco, which made the helpless imbecile titter with pleasure. It charmed her to see him smile; yes, it was not difficult for a clever man of the world—and Antonio was that, if anything—to see that there was danger in this quarter to the widow's money. But his plans were maturing.

At last came the time for the opening waltz. In the era of bygone, uncivilised generations, they may have had special national or local dances at these out-of-the-way places, but not now. The dullest village must have its programme modelled on Parisian lines—but I am digressing.

When the time came—the group had been seated for a few minutes near Marco's couch—Antonio rose, and, with a smile offered his arm to the girl. In lieu of accepting it, she stamped her foot, although she spoke not, bit her lips, as one could easily see, and then broke into tears. Her mother was alarmed, Marco rose on his elbow in his excitement—he could do no more—while Antonio was the only composed one of the group.

After a few seconds of hysterics, of sobbing and choking, Maria gasped out something like a refusal to dance with her proposed partner, and, like the peasant she was, added some insulting epithets to give force to her refusal. Her mother was shocked, and commenced to scold her, while even the pitiful Marco roused himself to upbraid her. Cruel, cruel Maria—he began in that strain—to seek to wound

one so kind, so devoted to him; one whose greatest happiness was to see poor Marco happy. Where was her gratitude—where her love for her helpless brother, whose heart she was piercing by every unkind word she uttered to Signor Antonio?

This had a great effect upon her; she was soft-hearted, and, as I have said, ignorant, so could not bear reproaches from this miserable creature. She stooped and kissed him, then drying her tears, turned with an apology to Antonio, said she would dance, and begged him to forgive her. Of course Antonio did forgive her, adding some really neat compliments, and this in its turn moved the feeble Marco to tears—it has all along been understood, I hope, that they were but of a common grade.

Madame became affrighted anew at this exhibition, and would have sent for cordials, smelling-salts, and what not, but Antonio assured her there was no occasion for this. He had in his pocket a flask which held a restorative he sometimes used when weary or worried. It was given him by a friend, a physician—and this was true beyond all question.

He poured out a small quantity of this cordial, which Marco drank, and at once declared himself better and more cheerful. He was so without doubt, but he would have thought and said so if he had been supplied with spring water only.

The rest of the evening passed off well. Maria was, in appearance at least, docile; Madame was pleased; Antonio had more reason to be satisfied than any of them; while Marco, again with tears of joy in his eyes, explained, when his couch was removed, that he had never, never been so happy.

If the young farmer had really been at the fête, he did not venture to show himself; Maria was, at the least, humbled and obedient; Madame Dupont thought the evening a great success, and so did Antonio. He had begun well, and each succeeding step would be easier than the preceding.

Yet there was no hurry. Marco fluctuated, as was usual with him, the only difference noticeable being that his periods of cheerfulness had now more of excitement in them than before, while his intervals of depression were worse. He grew fonder and fonder of Antonio, looking forward to his daily visits—it had long come to that—with the utmost interest, brightening up while he was there, although his strength would not support even a cheerful excitement for long.



Sometimes, ere Antonio left, the invalid would be prostrate almost to fainting, but a small glass of the physician's cordial would revive him, although as restoratives were always kept in the chamber, and as Antonio did not think it wise to take the nurse into confidence—nor Marco often—it was not known how much the youth owed to this draught. On one occasion, however, Marco sank so low that the doctor, who was called in before Antonio saw the invalid, despaired of rallying him. He administered such remedies as he was familiar with, but his skill did not reach to such symptoms or maladies as these, and but that Antonio was in the neighbourhood, and saw the boy, all would have been over.

It was not too late to arrest the action of the physician's cordial, and it was not quite time for—for the full realisation of Antonio's plans. Marco rallied; he knew he owed his safety to Antonio, and his confidence in him increased accordingly, which was a very desirable result.

This occurrence warned the gentleman to be more guarded, to be slower in his operations, yet, as we are after all, the creatures of circumstances, he was led, by two incidents which happened soon after, to alter this determination.

He was alone in his own apartments one afternoon—these were, of a necessity, in the vicinity both of Madame Dupont and of Marco. He was seated, thoughtfully smoking a cigarette, for he had some critical matters to occupy his mind; his sitting-room opened on to a platform under a verandah, and this could be reached from the ill-kept, little frequented garden at the back.

Suddenly a figure appeared crossing the garden; it ran up the two or three steps under the verandah, and crossing the room sank at Antonio's feet. It was Maria; he had known that at once, and, although he had not expected such a visit, there was something not altogether surprising about it.

She was sobbing. I have said how weak, how provincial she was—she was easily led to sob; he tried to raise her up, and spoke soothingly as he did so. But still she grovelled before him, and burst into a rhapsody, imploring his mercy and sympathy for—above all things—for the loves of herself and the farmer.

I should occupy too much time if I attempted to repeat all the interminable conversations which occurred at various stages

of this adventure; I must merely indicate what passed. She said he might have all her money—she did not want it; Victor, the peasant in question, did not want it; Signor Antonio might have it all. Signor Antonio did not love her; he could not love a poor homely girl, such as she was, while Victor loved her, and she loved Victor. Would the signor take her portion and spare her? She would be grateful to him all her life, and so would Victor; she would pray for him every day, and so would Victor.

This was grotesque enough in itself to provoke a smile in any man with a sense of humour; but Antonio spoke with magnificent gravity when he soothed the absurd girl, yet at that moment he had more respect for her than ever before. He had not given her credit for such astuteness as would enable her to understand his motive, and to penetrate the secret of his suit. That she had penetrated it he knew to a surety, although he was not likely to own it, nor likely to give way to oblige the interesting Victor.

She made a passionate appeal, begging him to forego his influence with Madame, which, she owned, was overpowering, and spoke of the happiness so generous a soul as his would experience in witnessing the happiness of others. This, we know, is the poor romantic trash which girls and boys pick up so easily—but to offer it as an argument to Antonio!

Well, I must be brief. Maria left spirit-broken, perhaps—heart-broken, I believe, is the correct expression—but more in awe of Antonio and his influence than ever, and less able to oppose his and her mother's influence. Such was the effect of a few well-chosen words, chosen so as to illustrate an unbending, a master mind. I have reason to believe Antonio was proud of his management of this interview.

The incident in itself would have warned him that he had no time to lose, but a still more suggestive communication awaited him. For a couple of days he had seen nothing of Madame, although he knew she was at home; he wondered at this, and when he saw her afterwards fancied he could discern traces of sorrow on her features. He asked her if this were so, and what it was that had disturbed her; he took it for granted, without her answer, that she was in sorrow.

She replied at once that her mind was greatly troubled; she had experienced much care and anxiety, she said, more

than he knew, although she had related great part of her history to him. She had lately thought much upon the future of her children, and had come to a resolve.

When Maria was married, and safe in the care of such a husband as Antonio, she should be happy as to her daughter's future, and she would at once provide for Marco. She should give to the head of a certain religious establishment a sum of money, enough to ensure the comfort of her afflicted child, such comfort as he could know; at his death this money would revert to the priest, for religious uses, of course.

For herself she might—she might—Madame seemed unnecessarily disturbed here; she might decide on going to a foreign land; she did not know; her movements were uncertain; but she had made up her mind to see less of the world than she had done of late. And at this point of her speech she broke into sobs and hysterics just as abruptly as her daughter had done.

No more was to be learnt from her, but enough had passed to alarm Antonio; there were signs of a morbid excitement about her which might lead to the most serious results; in short, he feared that the bulk of her wealth might go to a set of worthless monks, a class whom he held in the profoundest detestation. It was clear he must arrange for an early marriage, and unless Marco's disappearance took place still earlier—but I need not linger to tell how his reflections ran, all can guess them.

Madame was as good as her word; she saw no one, and scarcely ever left her house; late at night she would go to see Marco, but that was all. The poor cripple would have been very dull but for Antonio, who saw him daily, and cheered him by his conversation, making up surely for any conduct which might be deemed less friendly.

The prescription given by Dr. Franke could be graduated in strength with the most exquisite delicacy; it was now time to increase its power. The youth found the difference, and, though he usually supposed he was taking the cordial provided by the nurse, never felt so well or cheerful as when he received it from the hands of his friend Antonio.

Again the alternations between cheerfulness and depression set in, and on one afternoon when Antonio had paid his visit and left—having an engagement to drive

Maria out to see a friend at a neighbouring village—Marco sank so low under an attack, if I may so describe it, of this depression, that it was for some time thought he was dead, and it was evident he could not rally if other attacks followed.

From this one, however, he did rally, proving that his constitution was stronger than had been supposed—so Antonio reckoned. It would have been cruelty to the invalid himself, to prolong the process, and Antonio was by no means of a harsh or cruel disposition, so he resolved at once to relieve the poor fellow and make himself secure.

So on the next day, and on the day after that, he gave him so much of the secret cordial that it should have closed the history within twenty-four hours; but, to his amazement, Marco was not perceptibly worse. This was entirely inexplicable, and as some report was afloat of a priest having been seen at the house of Madame Dupont, a priest who appeared to be avoiding observation—I have said that Antonio occasionally spent a few crowns in obtaining information—it was alarming, as the mischief might be done, and the property alienated, at any hour.

Accordingly when, on the next day, Antonio went to the boy, his flask contained a cordial scarcely to be distinguished in colour, taste, or smell, from that he had previously used; but potent, swift, and as far beyond the reach of palliatives, as the bite of the cobra itself. The symptoms following its use would be natural, mostly such as might be expected in the case of such a miserable object as Marco Dupont.

He brightened up, of course, when his friend entered; he always did this, and to-day his voice actually seemed stronger, his eyes clearer, than usual. Almost the first sentence he uttered startled Antonio, for he said that a priest had been to see him, with Madame Dupont, on two nights running. His friend did not ask for details, he knew what this meant, so he allowed the youth to run on, until, as was generally the case, when he spoke much, he showed signs of exhaustion, when he said he would give him his cordial.

He rose, went to the little table on the other side of the room, where this cordial was kept—for, as I have said, he generally allowed Marco to suppose that he took the nurse's potion—and made a show of moving the bottle which contained the drink for the invalid.

This table stood near a glass door rarely

opened, and Antonio turned towards it, as he filled a glass from his flask, so that he should keep his back to the youth—a proper precaution in such a case, although Marco was hardly likely to notice anything.

As he poured out the draught he happened to lift his eyes to this glass door, and recoiled with—horror, not terror, for he was a brave man. Standing as he did close to this door, he found himself looking directly upon, almost touching, indeed, a scowling face, which was glaring with a savage expression right into his eyes. The same glance told him that this was an ecclesiastic, a tall dark man, in whom, even in this shock of surprise, there seemed something vaguely familiar.

He had just time to think that this might be an optical delusion, when the door was thrown open, the priest with one long stride reached him, and ere he could offer any resistance, had wrung the glass from his hand. "Traitor!" hissed the new-comer.

It does not detract from Antonio's reputation for courage to say that he sank on to a chair, for the moment powerless. The apparition in itself was sufficient to confound any man, but he had recognised in the syllables just uttered, the voice of his associate, Dr. Franke!

In the stunned agitation and whirl of the moment, he was unable even to try to think how the convict, whom he had left two or three hundred miles away in prison, could be here, in Rosato, a priest. "Do not move, or you are a dead man!" continued Franke. "I am armed."

He was armed; a movement disclosed a broad dagger and a steel pistol inside his vest, and the returning observation of Antonio showed that other shadows were thrown on the floor of the room the man had just left.

Franke dipped his finger into the glass and applied it to his tongue.

"As I thought!" he ejaculated, with a malignant scowl. "Having baulked you with your first dose, I knew the remedy, as I knew the effect, I guessed what your next move would be, and I have foiled you again. But that my own liberty depends on secrecy and silence, you would die now—in this room. I have sworn to kill you whenever we may meet, but even my vow must yield to higher considerations. Victor! Marta!"

On this there entered the young boor, the farmer I have spoken of, who was, as

it appeared, the only stranger entrusted with Franke's identity—and Madame Dupont.

It then flashed upon me—I mean upon Antonio—what proved in reality to be the case. Franke was Dupont; this was his wife, who had supposed him dead—executed for a crime not so dignified as rebellion; but his sentence had been commuted to imprisonment for life. We all know what this means in Italy for a man who has money or friends.

I do not mean to say that Antonio divined all this at the time. He learnt it from Victor, and from an old hag who was his guardian for a fortnight; for quite that period he was at the farm of Victor, taken thither, bound and gagged, in a straw cart after nightfall. Here he was told enough to enable him to understand what had happened: not that this was intended for his gratification, it was evidently regarded as a means of paining him.

Franke had a second time made his escape, that is, his jailors had accepted a bribe; and he was bitterly, but unjustly, incensed against Antonio, who, after all, had only acted on the promptings of self-preservation, and, to a certainty, as Franke, or Dupont, himself would have acted. After many risks, he reached Rosato in the disguise of a priest. How he heard that his wife lived there Antonio never knew.

He did not care much, it is probable, for Madame, but he appeared to have some feeling for his daughter, and—so unaccountable are the freaks of nature—he actually loved the imbecile Marco! Only think of that!

Madame was shocked, almost killed, by his reappearance, but forgave everything, of course, and agreed to go with him to America. Hence her talk about grief, and hence her seclusion. She intended to provide for Marco, as he could not accompany them, while Maria would wed Antonio. Franke—it comes more natural to call him by that name—was glad to hear that his daughter would thus be provided for, and perhaps would not have heeded her appeal, even had she made one, in favour of Victor.

But some unlucky chance led the girl to describe Marco's illness in a manner which roused the doctor's suspicions. I believe, too, the boy had told her of his sometimes having cordial other than that provided by the nurse. On that afternoon, when

Antonio had driven out with Maria, and had expected to find the boy dead on his return, Franke saw Marco in the fit, recognised the symptoms, tried the remedy, and was satisfied.

He had not seen Antonio, and now he knew that he must be in Rosato, or someone was to whom Antonio had revealed the secret, so watched for him, and recognised his former friend.

The rest I have told you. Antonio never saw the doctor again; indeed, when set at liberty, he was sensible that it would be wise to adhere to the conditions laid down, and so abstain from drawing any particular attention to the case. He was satisfied that Franke had many dangerous friends in the country.

He heard sometime afterwards that the doctor had safely made his escape, while Maria was married to Victor, the farmer. Marco was dead, but whether any of the money had gone to the priests, or not, Antonio could not learn, and was not anxious enough on the subject to return to the neighbourhood to enquire.

He (Antonio) had many adventures, with his share of success and disappointment, as other men have had; but, as I said at first, he always considered this as the most cruel dashing of the cup from the lip that he had ever experienced.

## THE SOLDIER'S STORY.

### I.

It is frequently said that tales of adventure in India are all cast in the same mould, and that they tend to grow wearisome and monotonous by sheer family resemblance. There is a large measure of truth in the criticism. It would be hard for even the generous imagination of a Baron Munchausen to evolve at this date anything very novel in the way of the tiger, alligator, or snake stories which form the staple of recent Anglo-Indian reminiscences.

But the episode which I propose to relate belongs to a totally different category, with its interest centred in what may be termed the elemental passions of the human heart.

It occurred on the morrow of my recovery from a sharp attack of illness, which, but for the devotion and skill of Peplow, our regimental surgeon, might have developed into a dangerous fever. I was indulging in a surreptitious cigar with a fellow convalescent under the tamarind tree in the square before the ugly barrack

hospital of Burshur one sultry evening, when who should appear but my chum, Oswald Harlow. The boy—he was little more—was in a state of bewildering excitement; it was my standing joke that there was quicksilver in Oswald's composition.

"Bravo, Donald!" he shouted, "we'll both of us get a month's leave and go. The shooting is first-rate, and it'll set you up quicker than all the pills and potions of *The Alchemist*," which latter was the irreverent camp nickname of the genial surgeon.

"Gently, or I shall be swept away by a tornado. I've no notion of your meaning, Harlow; will you please explain?" I said.

"Why, it's an invite from Cayford, to pay him a visit at his box in the Naringheri Hills, and the Commandant will put no obstacles in the way. I'll answer sharp for the pair of us by the next post."

"But——"

"Nonsense," Oswald cried, "I'll listen to none of your 'buts' or 'peradventures.' It's the very prescription you need. Take it as settled."

I was nothing loth. The transition from the scorching air of the parched plains to the comparative freshness of the distant hills would certainly be for my benefit. I had longed for days past for just such an opportunity, and it was certain that the accommodation so kindly offered would be agreeable and satisfactory. Major Cayford, although at this date not personally known to me, was one of the most popular officers on the Indian establishment, and the hero of several feats of arms during the last Candahar campaign, which might well have entitled him to the Victoria Cross. The question which I had been on the point of asking when Harlow impetuously broke in with his rebuke was simply how it chanced that Major Cayford so much as knew of my existence. But I easily guessed. Harlow had confided to me how, while in cantonments at Lucknow, on his first arrival in the East, he had fallen in love with a fair girl who was undeniably the belle of her very select set; how he had pressed his suit, and won a conditional promise—on the score of his brilliant prospects as heir to an ancient Lincolnshire baronetcy and a great estate. I understood that the girl and he corresponded, and I remembered that her name was Edith Cayford. Here again was the key to my friend's exaltation of mood; an invitation to the Major's retreat at Gurrundoree



was an invitation to the presence and smiles of the maiden he loved. But it was good of Harlow to bear in mind his less favoured comrade, and to suggest, as he had undoubtedly done, the extension of Major Cayford's hospitality to myself.

The prophecy of the Commandant's complaisance was justified by the event, and a week later Oswald and I set off on our expedition, the envy, I am afraid, of scores of poor fellows who were compelled to wrestle on with the terrible languor of the hot season, and to dream of sport in mountain jungles as of the joys of Elysium.

The journey was long, but the invigorating sense of what was to come destroyed its tedium, if it could not altogether—for one of us—banish its fatigue.

The bungalow hidden away in this remote corner of the north-western hills was commodious and well appointed. The presence of so many luxuries and rare articles of virtu testified at once to Major Cayford's wealth and cultured tastes. He was not merely the "rude soldier" which the references to his prowess afforded in War Office records might have seemed to foreshadow.

Our welcome was exceedingly cordial, and a very brief space spent in the society of Miss Cayford convinced me that my friend's enthusiasm was not misplaced. She was a charming girl, with precisely those differences of temperament which by the law of contrast would commend her to volatile, impulsive Harlow.

The regimental news satisfactorily discussed and dismissed, conversation on the evening of our arrival turned in the direction of a chronic trouble, which it seemed was just now weighing more heavily than usual upon our host's mind. There may or may not be an undiscovered scientific foundation for the popular belief in presentiments, but I have thought many times since that here at least was an instance of stirring events casting their black shadow beforehand.

"When I took over this bungalow," said Major Cayford, "from the gentleman who erected it—a retired servant of the old Company—I received a hint, after the bargain was struck, that the hill people in this district were unusually turbulent and dangerous neighbours. I scarcely noticed the warning, but circumstances soon brought it back to my recollection. Our property disappeared, our boundaries were invaded, and twice an English servant was beaten within an inch of his life. For these

offences chastisement was inflicted, but with little effect. Then I tried a different plan. With a boldness for which my wife condemns me—though Edith is on my side—I made arrangements for putting two of these folks on our domestic staff, and thus obtaining by diplomacy hostages for the good behaviour of their kinsmen. My ruse has ended in partial failure, and in the language of the Foreign Office, 'relations are once more strained.' We engaged a man and a woman, the latter as Edith's maid. The black scoundrel was a wily thief, and is now in the district gaol awaiting trial."

"But there is no fault to be found with Nuradeh," put in Miss Cayford, softly toying with the gold beads of a bracelet which, as I had seen it before, I had reason to know was Oswald's gift.

"Decidedly I shall still hesitate to trust her," said Mrs. Cayford.

The Major growled out a robust expletive against the whole of Nuradeh's tribe, and but for the presence of the ladies, might have banished them in imagination to very warm regions indeed.

Harlow and I had ostensibly come to Gurrundoree on a hunting expedition, although I believe my fellow sub could readily have forgotten the fact, and have lingered, like a lotus-eating knight, in his lady's bower. And game, the Major assured us, the hill thickets offered in abundance; pig, cheetah, bear, panther, the velvet-footed Madame Stripes with her cubs, were all at the disposal of our shooting-irons. It was a prospect that sent the blood coursing with new vigour through every vein of my body. In all soberness it was the best prescription that kindly Fate, in her garb of physician, could have tendered. I forgot that I was on the roll of the "Alchemist's" patients, and that by the skin of my teeth I had lately escaped a treacherous disease. Existence was again a joy, and such things as pain and lassitude, ague chills and unstrung nerves, seemed part of the paraphernalia of some hideous dream. They were of the past, and the present was instinct with the keen delight of genuine sport.

On the second day we commenced the business of our visit in earnest, an investigation being planned of a forest with a most unpronounceable name some three miles from the wretched village of Gurrundoree, and four from our host's bungalow.

We had engaged the services of some half-score of native guides and beaters, and

our hopes and ambitions ruled high. Two of our satellites were possessed of as villainous countenances as it was ever my lot to look upon, but they were wiry, well-built fellows, and obsequious to a degree.

"Cut-throat is written upon these dusky foreheads," I said to Harlow.

He laughed. "Handsome is that handsome does," he answered. "If they give you your first chance of a shot at a tiger, you won't complain of your escort by nightfall, I fancy."

We divided our forces and set out, the Major and Oswald taking one track, and myself with my swarthy allies another. A common rendezvous was appointed at a spot familiar to the natives if not to us.

Judging from my own meagre exploits, it was a distinctly disappointing venture, and as the day wore on I grew more and more out of humour. We certainly came upon tracks in the forest denoting the recent neighbourhood of the brutes which in vain we were stalking; but these signs were all.

Suddenly a strange sensation pressed upon my heart. I was alone in those mysterious wilds—deserted, with not a single beater who would answer to my call. It was hard at first to believe what was nevertheless an ominous and disconcerting fact. I shouted, and faint mocking echoes came back from the tangled growth around. I turned despairing steps first in one direction and then in another; my eyes fell only on sombre brown rock, luxuriant foliage, and rank jungle grass.

That this movement, whatever it might portend, was of set purpose I could scarcely doubt. A signal that escaped my notice had been given, and with stealthy, panther-like movement, my guides and assistants had one and all retreated.

What was their object? This was the alarming question that followed upon the first shock of surprise. The probabilities were that I had been lured farther and farther from my English colleagues and into a part of these rocky, wooded fastnesses where rescue would be difficult, and the discovery by my own unaided powers of the right path all but hopeless.

With what aim I was at a loss to guess. Whatever the bad feeling between the hillsmen and Major Cayford, they had no conceivable ground of enmity against myself.

Debating this arduous problem, straining eye and ear for tokens of some human

presence, hoping against hope for a happy and an innocent solution of the enigma, I plunged on and on through the underwood in the direction in which I imagined I might best reach the rude track to the village.

I learned later that my course conducted deeper and yet deeper into the wilds. But it was a mistake for which I—and Oswald even more so—have never ceased to be grateful.

My cartridges had vanished with the scoundrelly deserters, or I might have fired a shot now and again in the hope—however faint—of discovering my whereabouts to friends. As it was I was compelled to reserve the two charges in the barrels of my "Express" and those in my revolver for an emergency that might any moment face me. Upon their timely and effectual use my life might not improbably depend.

Convalescent as I was, full strength had not yet returned; and after an hour or more of this lonely marching to an unknown and very possibly perilous goal, I began to feel the effects of the day's toil and of this new mental strain in a sense of fatigue. And, indeed, whether it were wiser to pause or to go forward I could not settle. Either course had its own peculiar dangers. But, despite my weariness, the suspense that was preying upon my mind effectually prevented continued inaction. The very misery of my lost and precarious condition goaded me into renewed effort.

I found myself at last on the outskirts of at least one portion of the forest, and at a point from whence a trail led down a precipitous descent to the bottom of a narrow ravine. Around me on every side surged the billowy wastes of jungle; night was approaching, and if I retraced my path into those obscure depths it might easily befall that the hunter should become the hunted, and a fate be mine whereby, under the scourge of my cruel forebodings, I already shuddered.

There was the slender chance that by following the line of the ravine I might reach some point of ultimate contact with my fellows. I clambered down over the uneven stones, and as I did so a crashing amongst the woods to my right—though at some considerable distance—warned me that dangerous forest foes were even now in my vicinity. Truly mine was an unenviable predicament!

I grasped my trusty "Express" with a

firmer grip, and waited. But no other sound broke the stillness. As I grounded the weapon, and wiped the moisture of perspiration from my brow, I started. In the dust at my feet glittered like a star a small gold bead.

Were my wits deserting me? Was I moving amongst phantoms—to awake by-and-by in the dismal ward at Burshur? If not, then the trinket which had so unexpectedly caught my eye had been this very morning part of a slender bracelet clasping the dainty arm of Miss Edith Cayford.

## II.

THERE are moments in life freighted with all the emotions, the fears, the perplexities, the uncertainties of long years, as it seems, then and afterward, to those who endure the pressure of their care. In all modesty I may affirm that this was such a juncture. Under what circumstances had my host's daughter lost this golden bead? Above all, how came it here?

It was not easy to discover a commonplace and reassuring explanation of the strange phenomenon. The omens pointed rather to tragedy and crime. It had surely needed violence to wrench this single tell-tale link from its place in the exquisitely balanced chain, and, considering who was donor of the ornament, this violence was most unlikely to have been offered by the owner of the bracelet. Again, there was the coincidence of the separation in our shooting party, so easily and subtly arranged by the shikarri in charge of the gang of beaters, with its sequel in my subsequent desertion, and in whatever evil fate might have come upon the Major and Oswald Harlow. The stratagem which had proved so successful seemed to be part of a scheme to the inner import of which the fragment of yellow gold resting upon my trembling palm was as yet my only clue. There was no mistake in the identity of the trinket. Again and again I examined its shape, the boring through it, the delicate chasing upon its surface; and the more prolonged the investigation the more convinced I became that my first impressions were correct, and that the bead was in truth one that properly belonged to Edith Cayford's bracelet. My imagination, under the impulse of this startling discovery, painted pictures of horror that for many moments rooted my feet to the spot, and caused me to forget

my own forlorn condition. It was my gloomy conviction that the smouldering feud between Major Cayford and the villagers of Gurrundoree had developed a new and disastrous phase, and that the imprisonment of the dishonest tribesman, of which our host had spoken, had been followed, in the hour of their opportunity, by a bloody reprisal.

My fatigue had vanished. The mind asserted anew its supremacy over the body, and I resolved, without further delay, to follow this narrow, winding path, which was clearly the track of the marauders, even if it should lead me into a trap.

I had swept round the brow of the hillside, and once more traversed a belt of the jungle before my surroundings afforded any definite idea of what was in store for me.

Then, either my ears were playing me false, or I heard a woman's wail. There was a glimmer of light through the dense foliage to the left; I struck what an Australian settler would call a bee-line to reach it. My route brought me out into an open space in front of what at first looked like gigantic burrows in the dark background of the mountain, but which I now know to have been certain of the rock caves which, with their origin hidden in the mists of antiquity, form a distinctive feature of all this region.

I had little time for reflection, or for noting the natural phenomena around. I had ignorantly, yet with a right good-will, stumbled upon the retreat of successful conspirators—and upon the prison in which they proposed to hold their victim against the day of ransom.

Haughty and indignant, with her father's spirit animating her disdainful defiance and censure of her captors, stood in the forefront of the tableau Miss Edith Cayford. She was guarded by two lithe natives, in one of whom I recognised the uglier of my treacherous acquaintances of the morning. From the voluminous folds of a dingy native cloth, which lay at Edith's feet, I guessed that she had just been restored, from a condition of helpless and necessarily quiescent captivity, to the use of limbs and voice. It was doubtless the first miserable realisation of her evil lot which had wrung from her lips the cry which yet echoed in my brain. She had instantly regained her fortitude, and I could not but observe how much of the attitude of the whipped hound there was in the demeanour with which the stalwart hillsmen listened to her scathing rebukes. Miss Cayford was an English

girl, and a soldier's daughter every inch of her. Let cosmopolitan sentimentalists say what they please, race influence is potent yet to curb the unleashed passions of the vengeful children of the East.

It was probably the vigour of these richly-deserved denunciations, and the effect that, in spite of the rival argument of more or less triumphant force they produced, which prevented my own arrival from being noticed at the instant. I had time to take the bearings of the dubious problem that faced me, and to prepare mentally, and by a stealthy examination of my weapons, for the struggle which I foresaw was at hand.

The odds were against a rescue. I was alone and unsupported; and the probability was that at the first challenge my two adversaries would be reinforced by a dusky horde. Moreover, if by any amazing reverse of fortune, I were successful, and able to succour Miss Cayford from the power of her father's enemies, it was more than likely that we should both perish miserably in the forest.

Yet alternative there was none, and in my despair I had grown reckless. With a williness modelled upon that of the scoundrels upon whose heads I was at least resolved to wreak unavailing vengeance, I drew a few paces backwards, and worked my way round to a station from whence I could both cover the line of the natives' retreat and at the same time be myself protected, by a rocky shield, against assault from the rear.

At the very moment that the operation was concluded I was detected. A fierce shriek of concentrated dismay and disgust rang up from the plateau, and I felt, rather than saw, that Edith Cayford's glance was following the line of her captors, and that her fair frame was quivering with all the excitement of a revived hope and of the knowledge that aid was at hand. Alas that my resources were so inadequate to the dire need of the situation!

I held the nearer of the two disturbed and confounded villains spellbound by the magic of a levelled breechloader. He understood, from my gesture, if not from my words, that to stir a solitary pace would be to court destruction, and, as it appeared, he had a wholesome fondness for a sound skin. He threw up his hands in token of surrender.

"No, sahib! Be merciful, sahib!" he cried.

To my huge surprise and relief the con-

tagion of this example of abject cowardice infected his fellow. He went down into the black dust and grovelled like the treacherous snake that he was before the Feringhee, whom no doubt he had believed to be by this time satisfactorily accounted for through the agency of some roaming beast of prey, or at all events buried beyond hope of resurrection in the depths of the jungle.

My reappearance at this awkward place and hour must have seemed little short of miraculous to the superstitious, easily impressed native mind, and, combined with the stern measures which I was evidently bent on taking, worked a transformation as welcome as it was unexpected.

But our peril was not yet at an end. In the midst of the surprised miscreant's voluble petitions for pardon, and of her own agitated thanks, Miss Cayford contrived to inform me that accomplices of her captors were picketed in the jungle around, and would doubtless attempt to retrieve the fortunes of their baffled plot. Action was necessary.

"Lend me your revolver," Edith said, and I obeyed her. It was loaded, and a dangerous weapon in unskilful hands; but a girl used to the unconventional experiences of life amongst these seditious hill-men might be trusted to know how to use it. I was astonished at the courage and dignity of Edith's bearing. I wished Oswald could have seen how the radiant beauty of the maiden he adored glowed like a jewel in its dark setting of danger. She helped me to bind together, with their thumbs tied securely behind their backs, our sulky prisoners, the cords employed for this purpose being, by a fine irony of retribution, those that had previously—with the roll of native cloth—secured herself.

Then we set out on our homeward march, the villains understanding that any suspicion of intent to lead us astray, or any signal to their confederates, would mean a bullet in each brain-pan.

It was a terrible journey. In one of the thickest portions of the forest we were made aware that our enemies were taking heart of grace, and that our best precautions might, after all, prove insufficient. A bullet whizzed past within an inch of my head. The heroism of my companion was equal to the occasion. She had caught the gleam of a musket-barrel in the thick brake and had made out behind it a crouching dusky figure.



Edith fired, and it seemed that the hour of dismal crisis had indeed come. We heard a fearful yell—of chagrin or agony, or possibly both—a crash, and then the jungle seemed alive with dark, slinking forms. But it was a retreat we witnessed, a general “sauve qui peut.” Our two hostages made this fact clear. They must have expected that the white maiden’s vengeance—which, as it turned out, had struck down their leader—would now put an end to their own miserable existences. Their foreheads were again bowed into the dust, and their pleas for mercy recommenced.

It was with difficulty that we prevailed upon them to start anew, for the wretches were half dead with terror. But once moving towards the bungalow their rate of speed was everything that could be desired. They had finally recognised and accepted their defeat.

It was the shikarri in charge of our beaters who had been wounded by Edith Cayford’s opportune shot. From his confession we were able to comprehend what otherwise might have remained mysterious, or at most have been matter for conjecture.

The story in brief was as follows: The hillsmen had longed to release their captive kinsman, and there was reason to believe that Nuradeh—Miss Cayford’s maid—was actuated by warmer feelings than those of mere clanship towards the delinquent. It was certain that she had stayed on in the Major’s household in the familiar rôle of spy. It was Nuradeh who, learning of the projected hunting expedition, put in motion

the wheels of a hurriedly-arranged plot. The idea was that the bungalow should be entered during its master’s absence and Miss Cayford made a prisoner, if possible without alarming her mother. That then the two brothers of the culprit languishing in the district gaol should detain the girl in their remote hill haunts until terms could be made with the grief-stricken parents. My own faithless desertion had been a casual episode by the way, and one that in defiance of all the laws of probability was destined to bring to naught their scheme. And this cunning piece of treachery had only failed in the hour when its triumph must have appeared most assured. It was in vain attempts to tear away the stifling wrappings from face and limbs that the captive’s bracelet was broken, and that a solitary bead had rolled to earth to become in two senses a golden clue.

Long terms of imprisonment were in due course the fitting and well earned reward of the instigators of the attempted crime.

It only remains to add that these incidents drew yet closer the bond of friendship between Oswald and myself; that Major Cayford was shortly transferred to another station; and that in a very brief space it was my privilege and pleasure to stand as best man to Oswald Harlow on the occasion of his marriage to a sweet and charming girl, who, as I knew from an exciting experience, was as brave as she was beautiful, as dauntless in the presence of imminent and dreadful danger as beseemed a soldier’s daughter.



## TABLE OF EVENTS, 1885-1886.

### SEPTEMBER, 1885.

- 2.—Prince of Wales arrived in Stockholm on a visit to the King of Sweden.
- 9.—Meeting of British Association at Aberdeen. Inaugural address of Sir Lyon Playfair.
- 14.—The American yacht "Puritan" defeated the English yacht "Genesta," after a good race.
- 16.—The strike at Elswick Ordnance Works settled upon the terms offered by the directors.
- 18.—Revolution in Eastern Roumelia.
- 23.—The reported massacre of 10,000 Christians in China confirmed.
- 25.—Meeting of the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association, at which the recent increase in the School Board Rate was denounced.
- 26.—All the defendants in the Eliza Armstrong case committed for trial by the Bow Street magistrate.
- 27.—Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople decided the action to be taken in the matter of Eastern Roumelia.
- 29.—Election of Mr. Alderman Staples as Lord Mayor of London.

### OCTOBER, 1885.

- 1.—Death of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Sixpenny telegrams came into operation.
- 2.—Major Kitchener's report on the fall of Khartoum issued from the War Office.
- 4.—The Ambassadors of the Great Powers held their first formal Conference at Constantinople.
- 8.—Funeral Service at Westminster Abbey over the remains of Lord Shaftesbury.
- 10.—A rock, nine acres in area, at the Hell Gate entrance to New York Harbour, destroyed by dynamite.  
Great Fire in the Clerkenwell Road. Loss estimated at £120,000.
- 16.—Lord Strathnairn, G.C.B., died at Paris.
- 22.—Death of Dr. Fraser, Bishop of Manchester.
- 24.—Death of Dr. Woodford, Bishop of Ely.  
Dinner at the Mansion House to General Sir Frederick Roberts, to celebrate his appointment as Commander-in-Chief in India.
- 31.—Prince and Princess of Wales opened the Working Lads Institute at Whitechapel. Attempt to shoot M. de Freycinet in Paris.

### NOVEMBER, 1885.

- 4.—Dr. Wordsworth enthroned Bishop of Salisbury.
- 6.—New Bridge over the Dee opened by the Queen.
- 9.—Sir H. D. Wolff appointed Her Majesty's High Commissioner at Constantinople. Closing of the Inventions Exhibition.
- 10.—Conclusion of the Eliza Armstrong case at the Old Bailey. The defendants all convicted.
- 13.—War Proclamation issued by King Theebaw.
- 14.—The Pope gave his award in the Caroline Islands dispute between Germany and Spain, which had been referred to his arbitration.  
Declaration of War by Serbia against Bulgaria.
- 16.—Louis Riel executed at Regina, Canada.
- 21.—Manifesto issued by Irish National League, counselling Irish Electors in Great Britain to vote against the Liberal party.
- 24.—General Election. First day of polling.
- 25.—Death of the King of Spain. The Queen appointed Regent.
- 26.—Prince Alexander of Bulgaria entered Servian territory.
- 30.—Cessation of hostilities between Serbia and Bulgaria agreed to.  
Funeral of the King of Spain.

### DECEMBER, 1885.

- 1.—Submission of King Theebaw to British forces.
- 2.—Mandalay occupied by the British.
- 4.—Police order issued that all unmuzzled dogs, not under control, should be seized in the Metropolis.
- 8.—Death of Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt, the American capitalist.
- 13.—Terrible fire at Plymouth, twelve lives lost.
- 14.—The Very Rev. Lord Alwyne Compton, Dean of Worcester, appointed Bishop of Ely.
- 17.—The Act settling the Caroline Islands dispute signed by Cardinal Jacobini and the representatives of Germany and Spain at Rome.

- 19.—Duke of Edinburgh presided at the anniversary dinner of the National Orphan Home.
- 21.—Armistice agreed to by Servia and Bulgaria, to continue until March 1.
- 22.—M. de Freycinet announced in the French Chamber that a treaty had been signed by the Government of Madagascar, establishing a French protectorate over the Island.
- First passenger train run through the Mersey Tunnel.
- 23.—Colliery explosion near Ferndale, attended by great loss of life.

**JANUARY, 1886.**

- 2.—Twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of the Emperor of Germany to the throne of Prussia.
- News arrived that Upper Burmah had been annexed to the British Empire.
- 9.—Alarming ice accident in the Regent's Park. Over one hundred persons immersed, but no lives lost.
- 16.—Death of Mr. Joseph Maas, the celebrated English tenor.
- Grand Concert of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society at St. James's Hall, at which the Duke of Edinburgh played a violin solo.
- 18.—Severe fighting in Burmah. Enemy defeated with heavy loss.
- 27.—Defeat of the Conservative Government in the House of Commons by a majority of seventy-nine, on Mr. Jesse Collings's Amendment to the Queen's Speech, which expressed regret that no measures were announced for the present relief of the distressed agricultural classes.
- 29.—Resignation of Lord Salisbury's Government. Mr. Gladstone sent for by the Queen.
- 30.—Five persons killed at Holloway by the fall of four houses.

**FEBRUARY, 1886.**

- 6.—Council at Osborne. Seals of office delivered by the Queen to Mr. Gladstone and the new Ministry.
- Earl of Aberdeen appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland without a seat in the Cabinet.
- 8.—Serious rioting at the West End of London. Great destruction of property.
- 13.—Banquet at the Mansion House to the Duke of Edinburgh and the Elder Brethren of Trinity House to celebrate the appointment of H.R.H. as Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean.
- 20.—Departure of the Duke of Edinburgh to assume command of the Mediterranean Fleet.
- State entry of the Earl of Aberdeen into Dublin. Disturbances in College Green between the mob and Trinity College students.

- 22.—Report of the Commissioners to enquire into the origin and circumstances of the West End riots presented to the House of Commons, resulting in the resignation of Sir Edmund Henderson, Chief Commissioner of Police.
- 27.—Foundation Stone of the memorial chapel to the late Duke of Albany laid by the Prince of Wales.

**MARCH, 1886.**

- 5.—Mr. Labouchere's motion for the abolition of the House of Lords defeated in the House of Commons by 202 to 163 votes.
- 6.—The treaty between France and Madagascar ratified by the French Senate.
- 8.—Sir Charles Warren appointed Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.
- 13.—The treaty of peace concluded between Servia and Bulgaria ratified by the Sultan.
- 20.—Committal at the Westminster Police Court of Mrs. Adelaide Bartlett for the murder of her husband, and of the Rev. George Dyson as accessory before the fact.
- 26.—Great riots in Belgium. Mob fired upon and several persons killed.
- 28.—"Show Sunday"; private exhibition of pictures intended for the Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery.

**APRIL, 1886.**

- 3.—University Boat Race. Won by Cambridge by two-thirds of a length after a close and exciting race, in 22 minutes 29½ seconds.
- 8.—Brilliant reception given to the Abbé Liszt at the Grosvenor Gallery.
- 10.—Trial at the Central Criminal Court of the Socialists Hyndman, Burns, Champion, and Williams, all being acquitted.
- 17.—After a trial lasting six days Mrs. Adelaide Bartlett was acquitted at the Central Criminal Court of the murder of her husband. The charge against the Rev. Mr. Dyson, as an accessory before the fact, was withdrawn, and he gave evidence in the case.
- 23.—Great Orange demonstration in Glasgow to protest against Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule scheme, resulting in serious rioting.
- 28.—The race for the Two Thousand Guineas very easily won by the Duke of Westminster's Ormonde.
- 30.—The race for the One Thousand Guineas won by the Duke of Hamilton's Miss Jummy.

**MAY, 1886.**

- 1.—Grand performance, on the Handel Festival scale, of Gounod's "Redemption" at the Crystal Palace, in the presence of 30,000 people.

- 3.—Opening of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy.
- 4.—Opening in State of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition by the Queen.
- 6.—Opening of the Edinburgh International Exhibition by Prince Albert Edward of Wales.
- 11.—Opening of the Liverpool International Exhibition, with great ceremonial, by the Queen. Mr. David Radcliffe, Mayor of the city, knighted by Her Majesty on the occasion.  
Sir Joseph Pease's motion for the abolition of capital punishment rejected by the House of Commons by 117 votes to 62.  
Sir Thomas Erskine May, for many years Clerk to the House of Commons, gazetted to the Peerage as Baron Farnborough.
- 12.—Terrific hurricane at Madrid. Seventy persons killed and 200 injured.
- 13.—Death of Mr. Justice Pearson in London.
- 17.—The Queen of Spain gave birth to a son, who was born King of Spain.  
Death of Lord Farnborough (Sir Thomas Erskine May).
- 22.—Marriage of the Crown Prince of Portugal to Princess Amélie of Orleans.
- 24.—Sixty-seventh anniversary of the Queen's Birthday.  
Deceased Wife's Sister Bill rejected by the House of Lords by a majority of 22.
- 26.—The Derby: won by the Duke of Westminster's Ormonde, who beat Mr. Robert Peck's The Bard, and Mr. Manton's St. Mirin, and six others; the smallest field since 1804.
- 28.—The Oaks: Duke of Hamilton's Miss Jummy, 1; Prince Soltykoff's Argo Navis, 2; Mr. Benholm's Braw Lass, 3. Twelve started.
- 29.—Opening of new Putney Bridge by the Prince and Princess of Wales.
- 13.—Suicide of the King of Bavaria, whose body and that of Dr. Von Gudden, his medical attendant, were found in Starnberg Lake, late in the evening.
- 19.—Funeral of the late King of Bavaria at Munich, in presence of vast crowds of people.
- 21.—The first stone of the new Tower Bridge laid by the Prince of Wales on behalf of the Queen. H.R.H. was accompanied by the Princesses of Wales, their elder son, and three daughters.
- 22.—In the French Senate the Expulsion Bill was carried by 141 to 107 votes, the measure thus becoming law.
- 24.—The Count and Countess of Paris and their son, the Duke of Orleans, arrived at Dover from France; Prince Napoleon having gone to Geneva and Prince Victor to Brussels.
- 25.—Grand Ball at the Guildhall in honour of the Indian and Colonial Commissioners. Nearly 4000 persons were present.
- 28.—The Prince of Wales, who was accompanied by the Princess and two of their daughters, laid the first stone of the People's Palace (Beaumont Trust) in East London.
- 29.—Banquet at the Mansion House to the Prince of Wales and a large and distinguished assembly, which included most of the Colonial and Indian representatives.
- 30.—The Queen formally opened the Royal Holloway College, intended for the education of girls of the middle classes, and which was built and endowed by the late Thomas Holloway at a cost of £800,000.

## JULY, 1886.

- 1.—Polling commenced for the General Election.  
Prince of Wales installed Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England in presence of about 1,000 Mark Masons.
  - 2.—The Queen, who was accompanied by the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family, reviewed the troops at Aldershot, numbering nearly 15,000 men.
  - 5.—The Queen entertained at Windsor Castle upwards of 250 representatives of India and the Colonies.
  - 6.—Extension of the Parcels Post to the Colonies. First dispatch to Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia.  
The Russian Government notified that it would no longer regard Batoum as a free port, as arranged by the Treaty of Berlin.
  - 13.—The Duc d'Aumale expelled from French territory in consequence of his letter to the President of the Republic protesting against his expulsion from the Army.
- JUNE, 1886.**
- 2.—President of the United States married to Miss Agnes Folsom at Washington.
  - 6.—The Grand Prix of Paris very easily won by Mr. Vyney's Minting, who beat the Duke of Hamilton's Miss Jummy and seven French horses.
  - 7.—Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill defeated on its second reading in the House of Commons by (including tellers) 343 to 313 votes, the largest division on record, only thirteen members having been absent.
  - 10.—Prince Luitpold of Bavaria assumed the regency of that kingdom, King Louis the Second having been pronounced insane.
  - 11.—Dissolution of Parliament announced.  
By a majority of eighty-three the French Chamber passed a measure decreeing the expulsion from the Republic of the direct heirs of Imperial and Royal families which have reigned in France.



- 17.—Duel near Paris between General Boulanger, the French Minister of War, and M. de Lareintz, owing to a dispute in the Senate on the subject of the expulsion of the Duc d'Aumale. Neither hurt.
- 20.—Resignation of the Gladstone Government.
- 21.—The Marquis of Salisbury summoned to Osborne by the Queen.
- 23.—At Sandown Park the Eclipse Stakes, one mile and a quarter, value £10,000, the largest amount ever run for, was won by Mr. Barclay's Bendigo, who beat Lord Alington's Candlemas, Mr. John Hammond's St. Gation, and nine others in 2 min. 12 2-5 sec.
- Naval Review at Portsmouth in presence of the Queen, in honour of the distinguished Colonial and Indian visitors then in England.
- The divorce suit of Crawford v. Crawford and Dilke finished in favour of Mr. Crawford, the intervention of the Queen's Proctor having been dismissed with costs.
- 26.—Lord Salisbury returned from Osborne, having accepted the mandate of the Queen to form a Government.
- 27.—The last polling for the General Election (Orkney and Shetland).
- 30.—Two French aeronauts crossed the Channel from Dieppe, landing in a field near Tottenham.
- 13.—Disastrous colliery explosion at Wood End, near Leigh, Lancashire, causing the loss of thirty-eight lives.
- 16.—The Cycling Championship of Europe won at Berlin by an Englishman, Mr. E. Hale, who completed the distance (six miles) in 19 min. 3 sec.
- 18.—Arrival of the Queen at Edinburgh. Her Majesty made a State visit to the International Exhibition, and was received with great enthusiasm by a vast concourse of people.
- 19.—First meeting of both Houses of Parliament since the re-election of Ministers. Queen's Speech read by Commission.
- 21.—The Rev. W. J. Drought, English chaplain at Chantilly, expelled from France for having sent an address of sympathy from the English residents of that place to the Duc d'Aumale.
- Revolution in Bulgaria. Prince Alexander deposed, arrested, and conveyed out of the Principality, and a Provisional Government formed.
- 25.—By the falling of a wall in Meadow Street, Sheffield, seven children were killed and two others injured.
- The Revolutionary Government at Sofia overthrown, and a Council of Regency established, several of the officers who arrested the Prince being lodged in prison.
- 26.—Arrival of the King of Portugal in Berlin on a visit to the Emperor of Germany.
- 27.—Mr. Parnell's Amendment to the Address defeated in the House of Commons by 123 votes.

## AUGUST, 1886.

- 3.—The members both of the late and present Government had audience of the Queen at Osborne, the former to deliver, and the latter to receive, the seals of their respective offices.
- 5.—Meeting of the new Parliament, when Mr. Arthur Peel, the member for Warwick, was unanimously re-elected Speaker.
- 6.—Arrival of the King of Portugal at Cowes on a visit to the Queen.
- 8.—Continued serious rioting at Belfast; upwards of twenty people having been killed, and a great many others seriously wounded.
- Prince Alexander of Bulgaria arrived at Lemberg, in Galicia, and the town illuminated in his honour.
- Severe earthquake shocks in Greece, the Ionian Islands, and the Island of Zante, several hundreds of people reported to have perished.
- 29.—Prince Alexander arrived at Rustchuk, in Bulgaria, on his return to resume the government of the Principality.
- 30.—Large Socialist demonstration in Trafalgar Square to protest against the imprisonment of John Williams for street obstruction.
- Great heat in London, 90° in the shade having been registered.

## OBITUARY FOR 1885-1886.

**THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.** This eminent philanthropist was born in London, 1801, and was educated at Christ Church, Oxford. He was returned to Parliament in 1826, and continued a member of the House till he succeeded his father in the peerage in 1851. As Lord Ashley his name is connected with the passing of the 'Ten Hours' Bill, and with nearly all the philanthropic movements of the time. Lord Shaftesbury was especially the friend of the London Costermongers, and one of the tokens of esteem he most valued was a donkey presented to him by that confraternity. Lord Shaftesbury took the lead in many religious and philanthropic societies, and his death, which occurred on the 1st October, 1885, was regretted throughout the civilised world.

**MR. JOHN BOWES,** of Streatlam Castle, the oldest member of the Jockey Club and an owner of some famous racehorses in their time, such as Mundig and West Australian, died in Paris on the 9th October, 1885.

**FIELD MARSHAL LORD STRATHNAIRN,** whose services as Sir Hugh Rose proved so valuable during the Indian Mutiny, died in Paris on the 16th October, 1885. Lord Strathnairn was born in 1803, and entered the army in 1820. Rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, he pursued a diplomatic career for many years in the East, in which he distinguished himself during the Crimean War. Subsequently he held the command of the Central Indian Field Force during the Mutiny, and succeeded the late Lord Clyde as Commander-in-Chief in India. Sir Hugh Rose was raised to the peerage in 1866, and made Field Marshal in 1877.

**JAMES FRASER, D.D.,** Bishop of Manchester, was born in 1813, and educated at Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury Schools and at Lincoln College, Oxford, and gained a first-class in classics at that University. Dr. Fraser's career as fellow and tutor of Oriel, as a parochial incumbent, and as an educational authority, was crowned by the Bishopric of Manchester, which was bestowed upon him by Mr. Gladstone in 1870. Dr. Fraser proved a stirring and energetic prelate who entered zealously into all social and philanthropic work in the diocese, and his utterances on

various social topics were always of interest. The Bishop was deservedly popular among all denominations throughout the manufacturing districts. He died on the 22nd October, 1885.

**DR. WOODFORD,** Bishop of Ely, was born in 1820, and educated at Merchant Taylors' and Pembroke, Cambridge. He was ordained priest in 1845, and, after holding several parochial charges and an honorary canonry of Christ Church, Oxford, was selected to succeed Dr. Harold Brown in 1873 as Bishop of Ely. Dr. Woodford was the author of sundry volumes of lectures, tracts, and sermons. His death took place at the Palace Ely on the 24th October, 1885.

The first **DUKE OF ABERCORN** died at his seat in Ireland on Saturday, the 31st October, 1885. He was born in 1811, and succeeded to the numerous titles of the Hamilton family when only seven years of age. As Marquis of Abercorn he was well known in political life; was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1866; was rewarded for his services with a dukedom by the Prime Minister, Mr. Disraeli, in 1868; again went to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant in 1874, but resigned in 1876. The Duke left behind him a numerous family of sons and daughters, among whom his third son, Lord George Hamilton, has already attained eminence in political life.

**DR. WILLIAM BENJAMIN CARPENTER,** a well-known biologist and physiologist, died on the 10th November, from the result of accidental burns. Dr. Carpenter was born at Exeter in 1813, and was one of the most distinguished medical pupils of University College, London. Dr. Carpenter's "Manual of Physiology" and other scientific works have given him a wide reputation both in the profession and among the reading public. In 1844 Dr. Carpenter was elected Fellow of the Royal Society, and became soon after Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Lecturer at the London Hospital School of Medicine, and was subsequently appointed Registrar of the University of London.

The death of **LORD RANELAGH** on the 13th November, 1885, deprived the Volunteer Force of one of its earliest and most zealous promoters.

At the same date occurred the death of the HON. LOCKE KING, whose annual motion for the extension of the suffrage will be remembered by old parliamentary hands.

ALFONSO, King of Spain, born in 1857, received his military education at Sandhurst, and was proclaimed King in 1874. The King married in 1878 Mercedes, the daughter of the Duc de Montpensier, who died in 1878; and secondly, in 1879, the Archduchess Maria Christina of Austria. His death occurred on the 25th November, 1885. On the following day died the Marshal Serrano, once the favourite of Queen Isabella, whose share in the intrigues of the troubled reign of his royal mistress were sufficiently notorious.

THE DUKE OF SOMERSET, born in 1804, succeeded to the title in 1855, and died the 28th November, 1885.

MR. W. H. VANDERBILT, noted as one of the richest men of the age, and a ruling power in the railway world, was the son of Commodore Vanderbilt. The latter accumulated the enormous fortune which it was the work of the son to preserve and increase. Mr. Vanderbilt died in New York on the 8th December, 1885.

MR. JOSEPH MAAS, the great English tenor, died on the 16th January, 1886. He was born at Dartford, Kent, and received his early training at Rochester Cathedral, and then joined the Concert Company of Miss Louisa Pyne. His voice maturing into a fine tenor, he proceeded to Italy for musical education, and subsequently made a first appearance in "Babil and Bijou" on the English stage. From that time he took a leading position among English singers.

On the 14th February, MR. RANDOLPH CALDECOTT died at St. Augustine, Florida. Mr. Caldecott was born in Chester, in 1846, and was in his youth employed in a bank in Manchester. But the bent of his genius was so strong, and the drawings he executed so clever, that he soon became successful in book illustration, and hit the fancy of the age by the quiet humour and suggestive quaintness with which he reproduced the costumes and fancies of our great-grandfathers' days.

EDWARD LORD CARDWELL, a Cabinet Minister in many Liberal Administrations, was born in 1813, the son of a Liverpool merchant. He was educated at Winchester School and Balliol, Oxford, taking a double first-class degree in 1835. He was called to the bar and went the Northern Circuit for several years. Gaining a seat in Parliament as Member for Clitheroe, Mr. Cardwell first gained official experience in the school of Sir Robert Peel. He became President of the Board of Trade in Lord Aberdeen's Coalition Government, and shared in its downfall, due to the mismanagement of the

Crimean campaign. Mr. Cardwell from this time gravitated towards the Liberal party, and in 1859 joined Lord Palmerston's Ministry as Chief Secretary for Ireland—a post from which he escaped to the Duchy of Lancaster; and in 1864 he was made Secretary for the Colonies, and retained the seals of office under Lord Russell till the downfall of the Cabinet in 1866. In Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1868 Mr. Cardwell was appointed Secretary of State for War, and in this capacity he carried out that reorganisation of the army, which, whether for good or ill, will always be associated with his name. Mr. Cardwell represented Oxford for many years, and in 1857 he had the distinction of defeating Mr. W. M. Thackeray by a narrow majority. When the Liberal party were decisively beaten in 1874, Mr. Cardwell accepted the graceful retirement of the House of Lords, and was raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Cardwell. Lord Cardwell died on February 15th, 1886.

THE COMTESSE DE CHAMBORD, the devoted wife of the last representative of the elder branch of the House of Bourbon, died at Goritz on the 25th March, 1886. Since the death of the Comte de Chambord she had almost retired from the world, and devoted herself to the austerities of a religious life. The Comtesse, who was descended from Maria Theresa and the Royal House of Savoy, preserved in her husband's mimic Court of Frohsdorf all the stately traditions of the French monarchy, and was generally styled by the orthodox Legitimists as the last Queen of France.

SIR HENRY TAYLOR, the author of "Philip von Artevelde," died at Bournemouth on the 27th March, 1886, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. His fame as a poet, dramatist, and essayist, belongs rather to a generation that is past than to the present era. In spite of poetic and literary power of no mean order, Henry Taylor devoted himself to the honourable but prosaic career of a permanent official in the Colonial Office, and in 1873 was rewarded for long and faithful service by admission as Knight Commander to the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

On the 28th March, 1886, died in London the Most Reverend and Right Hon. RICHARD CHEVENIX TRENCH, D.D., late Archbishop of Dublin, who was born in 1807, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Dr. Trench was ordained in 1832, was appointed Vicar of Itchen Stoke in 1845, and Professor of Theology at King's College, London, in 1847. In 1856 he was appointed Dean of Westminster, and became well known in London society, where his humour and versatility secured him a reputation apart from his ecclesiastical dignity. In 1863 he became Archbishop of Dublin, resigning that charge in 1884.



THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER was born in 1818, of a respected Quaker family, and was educated at the Friends' School, Tottenham, commencing life at an early age as a Bradford manufacturer. In 1850 he severed his connection with the Society of Friends by his marriage with a daughter of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby. In 1861 he was elected Member for Bradford, and he continued to represent that constituency until his death. Mr. Forster became a hard-working official, first as Under Secretary for the Colonies, and afterwards as Vice-President of the Council on Education. In this latter capacity he carried through the House of Commons the Education Act, which still in its main provisions regulates the elementary education of the kingdom. Mr. Forster also carried the Ballot Act through the House; and so high was his reputation among his colleagues, that on the temporary retirement of Mr. Gladstone in 1875 from the leadership of the party, Mr. Forster's name was seriously canvassed as his successor. In 1880 Mr. Forster entered the Cabinet as Chief Secretary for Ireland, and if he failed to conciliate or control the elements of disturbance in the Sister Isle, perhaps the task was above mortal power to compass. Anyhow, he became bitterly unpopular in Ireland, and resigned office on the liberation of Mr. Parnell and his co-adjutors from Kilmainham Prison. From that time Mr. Forster occupied an independent position in the House, where he was always listened to with attention. He was a fluent though unpolished speaker, with a rough, energetic manner, and his courage and capacity were never questioned, although sometimes his judgment might be at fault. Mr. Forster died in London on the 5th April, 1886, after a long and trying illness.

THE EARL OF REDESDALE, a descendant of the ancient Border family of Mitford, was born in 1805—was educated at New College, Oxford, and in 1830 succeeded his father, a lawyer of renown, in the Barony of Mitford. In 1851 Lord Redesdale was elected Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords, an office he filled up to the time of his death. During that time he had the practical control of the private bill legislation of the Upper House, a power he exerted with inflexible integrity. Lord Redesdale died on the 2nd of May, 1886, and with him his honours become extinct.

An equally notable presence in the rival House was SIR THOMAS ERSKINE MAY, who held for many years the position of Chief Clerk at the table of the House of Commons. Not long before his death he had been created Lord Farnborough on his retirement from

office, but he did not live to take his seat in the House of Peers. Sir Thomas Erskine May's works on the parliamentary constitution and history are the acknowledged textbooks on the law and practice of Parliament. His death took place on the 17th of May, 1886, to the great regret of all old members of the House of Commons.

The suicide of LOUIS, King of Bavaria, on the 13th June, 1886, shortly after his deposition, was the strange and tragic finish of a strange and mournful existence. The eccentricities of the King had long been a matter of notoriety. His lonely and secluded existence; his passion for palace building on the most lavish and gigantic scale; his love and patronage of music, with the stories of the elaborate representation of his favourite works, with the King as sole auditor, had impressed the popular imagination, which saw a sort of royal method in his madness.

THE HON. AUGUSTUS CHARLES HOBART, better known as Hobart Pasha, was born 1822, the third son of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and entered the Navy in 1836. After serving with success and distinction, he retired on half-pay, and, impatient of inaction, entered the service of the Confederate States of America, and commanded a blockade runner on the coast. In 1867 he was appointed an Admiral in the Turkish fleet, and was presently raised to the rank of Pasha. He served the Sultan with great zeal and fidelity, and succeeded in regenerating the Turkish Navy, although the chapter of accidents prevented him from achieving any marked success in action. Hobart Pasha died at Milan on the 19th June, 1886.

The veteran pianist and composer, FRANZ LISZT, died at Bayreuth on the 1st of August, 1886. He was born in 1811, and at six years old began his career as a musician. In his thirteenth year he made his début in London, and subsequently made a successful tour through the provinces. In his youth he was associated with the literary Bohemians of Paris, and was the friend and admirer of "George Sand" and "Daniel Stern." Afterwards, at Weimar, as conductor of the Opera, he championed the cause of Richard Wagner and the music of the future. In 1865 Liszt received the tonsure as a priest, and soon obtained preferment to the title of the Abbé Liszt. His recent visit to London, and the excitement attending the ovations he received from the musical public, probably tended to shorten his days; and his devotion to the memory of his son-in-law, Wagner, made him insist upon attending the opening performance of "Tristan und Isolde" at the Bayreuth Theatre, which gave him the "coup de grâce."



## REVIEW OF THE YEAR.

THE year 1885-86 has been marked politically by two General Elections and two changes of Ministry, resulting generally in a considerable accession of strength to the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and the re-establishment of a Conservative administration, with Lord Salisbury at its head. The winter was remarkable for unusual and protracted severity, and for the distress thus produced among many branches of industry, aggravated by the depressed condition of trade and manufactures generally. A meeting of the unemployed in Trafalgar Square was followed by a riot among the rougher elements of the gathering, and a raid through some of the aristocratic quarters of the town, attended by the looting of shops and considerable damage to property. Something like a panic spread through London, and the general uneasiness was increased by reports of meetings and disturbances among the unemployed in various large towns. Considerable funds were raised under the auspices of the Lord Mayor of London and distributed by local agencies, and with the timely approach of summer the acutest symptoms of distress were alleviated.

In its social aspect the year has been memorable for the frequent appearance of the Queen among her faithful subjects. Her Majesty opened Parliament in person in January, and has taken part in the ceremonial and social observances of the season, and has also visited Liverpool and Edinburgh, with their respective exhibitions.

The current of foreign affairs during the year has been often agitated and unquiet. The settlement of the Afghan boundary question with Russia was hardly completed when affairs in the East of Europe were again complicated by a revolution in Eastern Roumelia—a principality created by the Treaty of Berlin—designed to effect its amalgamation with the kindred state of Bulgaria. A war ensued between Servia and Bulgaria, in which the Bulgarians under their gallant Prince Alexander obtained unexpected advantages. The war

was terminated by the influential Powers; and the aspirations of Greece for territorial aggrandisement at the expense of Turkey were repressed by a joint naval demonstration and the blockade of the Greek ports. Once more the Eastern Question comes to the front, owing to a sudden revolution in Bulgaria in the Russian interest and the deposition of Prince Alexander, followed by a counter revolution and the triumphant return of the Prince, the consequences of which events are still in the womb of the future.

The year has also witnessed the annexation of Upper Burmah to our Indian Empire, an operation performed with marvellous facility, but which has left on our hands many administrative difficulties, and a tiresome, desultory warfare with armed insurgent bands. In Egypt matters remain in statu quo, but our troops have suffered severely from the terrible heat of the desert.

Neither in science nor art has the year been marked by any extraordinary advance, although fruitful enough in the contributions of earnest and skilful workers.

In literature authors have been busy and successful without producing any epoch-making work. Among novelists Mr. James Payn has given us "The Heir of the Ages," and Mr. Charles Gibbon and Mr. Christie Murray have been busy, while Mrs. Cashel Hoey has produced a powerful story in "A Stern Chase." The boys of the period have been fortunate in adding to their libraries the capital romance of "King Solomon's Mines," as well as Mr. R. S. Stevenson's story of "Kidnapped," both of which have found many readers among children of a larger growth. In poetry the veteran Lord Tennyson has shown in "Tiresias" that time has not extinguished his former fire; and Mr. Austin Dobson and Mr. Edmund Gosse have each contributed a graceful volume of poems. Mr. Swinburne has given us only a volume of miscellaneous essays in prose.

Then we have a second series of the "Greville Memoirs," interesting to the future historian of the Victorian era. There is

strong and affecting interest, too, in Sir Henry Gordon's memoirs of his brother, General C. G. Gordon.

The catalogue of royal authors has also been further enlarged by the publication of the "Cruise of the Bacchante," describing the three years, voyaging and adventures of our two young princes, with full accounts of the regions they visited—the West Indies, the Falkland Isles, South Africa, Australia, Japan, China, Egypt, Palestine—forming a complete hand-book for a large portion of the world.

The year 1886, according to the prediction of a French savant, was to be marked by severe cosmic disturbances, and the result has verified the forecast. Besides many earthquake shocks in parts of the earth usually free from them, as well as violent eruptions from known volcanic centres, we have accounts of a terrible volcanic outbreak in New Zealand, in which many lives were destroyed, and a scene of unparalleled natural beauty laid waste. A disastrous earthquake has recently desolated some parts of Greece, and on the last night of August an earthquake shock in America wrecked the fine city of Charleston and created general alarm in the Southern States.

Among philanthropic movements we have to record the establishment of a worthy memorial to the late General Gordon in a Boys' Home, with temporary quarters at Fort Wallington, on the heights near Portsmouth, but which ultimately will be established at Aldershot, and will thus form the nucleus of something like a soldier's orphanage under the direct care and charge, as it were, of the British Army. The country owes a debt to Gordon, which the hero himself would desire to be paid to poor and homeless boys, such as he himself worked for, and with the revered name of Florence Nightingale, every soldier's friend, as one of the supporters of the proposed institution, and the active aid of at least two generations of the Royal Family, it may be hoped that funds will be found worthy both of Gordon and the mighty Empire in whose service he laid down his life.

The Dramatic Year has felt the influence of the general depression. New plays by authors new and old have appeared and disappeared, revivals have been numerous, though not brilliantly successful. A few genuine successes have been secured, but even these have lacked the furore of more prosperous days.

An adaptation of the first part of Goethe's tragedy of Faust, by W. G. Wills, has held the boards of the Lyceum with general approval ever since the dark dull days before Christmas, thanks to the striking impersonation of Mephistopheles by Mr. Henry Irving, and the sympathetic rendering of Margaret by Miss Ellen Terry.

Then we have had two new plays at the Princess's: one, *The Lord Harry*, on the familiar melodramatic lines; and the other, *Clito*, by Mr. Wilson Barrett and Mr. Sidney Grundy, of classic and tragic type. We have again melodrama and highly popular melodrama at the Adelphi, in *Harbour Lights*, the dramatic vigour of which is aided by an excellent *mise-en-scène*. The excellent comedy company of the St. James's Theatre have hardly been so fortunate as usual, the adaptations from the French of Mayfair and Antoinette Rigaud having failed to take hold of the public, although *The Wife's Sacrifice*, on the same lines, has proved fairly attractive. Little Jack Shepherd at the Gaiety, with Miss Nellie Farren in the title rôle, delighted the lovers of burlesque; and subsequently the Dixey troupe at the same theatre gave us a sample of the best American talent in the same line. The Pickpocket has replaced the comic *Private Secretary* at the Globe, and has succeeded in extracting the coins of eager playgoers to the very end of the season. Those who waited for Miss Minnie Palmer at the Strand were charmed with her reappearance in *My Sweetheart*, and preferred her in that character to any other. The Haymarket, after *Dark Days*, secured a taking piece in *Jim the Penman*, and the Court followed up the humorous vagaries of *The Magistrate* with the equally laughermoving *Schoolmistress*.

One of the best-earned scores of the year has been Mr. Robert Buchanan's, with Sophia, at the Vaudeville, an excellent adaptation of the inimitable "Tom Jones," with its naughtinesses judiciously pruned away.

Old Drury, with its recent speciality for spectacular melodrama, has prospered as usual with *Human Nature*, and *A Run of Luck* promises to justify its title. Then we have had matinées without number; a flying visit from Sarah Bernhardt and Jane Hading; plays à la Grecque and plays pastoral. Dramatic students have shown upon the trestles, and given us glimpses of the talent of the future. Altogether the year has been stirring enough, if the residuum of individual profit has been but small.

## THE COLONIAL EXHIBITION.

THE Indian and Colonial Exhibition terminates worthily a series of annual exhibitions, which have done much to entertain and, let us hope, to instruct the people of these countries. The "Fisheries" charmed from the novelty of the scheme, and from the breezy flavour of many of the exhibits, as well as the interest excited by the representatives of the fishing population from all parts. The "Healtheries" was full of interest to householders of every degree. The "Inventions"—people did not take kindly to calling the exhibition the Inventories—from the nature of things, was of heavier calibre, and not so generally understood of the people. And the Colonial Exhibition has proved, perhaps, the brightest and most attractive of all. No other realm could venture into competition with such a show, or bring together under one national flag such varied products of every clime—the mineral wealth, the riches alike of tropical and temperate vegetation, the representatives, in every shade of human colouring, of the subjects of one great Empire.

The bright and varied contents of the different courts have had the advantage of not being above the heads of people in general. The Indian jungle; the Ceylon tusker looking out from his lair; the mines of gold and diamonds, and their glittering and precious products; the rich carvings of the East; the ostrich feathers of South Africa; the strange fauna of New Zealand; the quill and bead work of the red men of Canada; the Indian Palace, with its native workshops and dignified hall of audience; all the flavour of aromatic woods and rich spices; these things will be long talked about in English homes all over the world, and as well among the straw kraals of the Caffres, as in the Indian bungalow, or the Australian settler's hut. Nothing so brilliant and enchanting has ever been seen as the illumination of the buildings and gardens at night—the lines of brilliant light, the myriads of glowing lamps among the trees; the flood

of brilliance from every flower-bed and cluster of plants; and then the flashing forth of the fountains under the pure white rays of the electric light; all this with the movement of the crowd, the eager murmur of thousands of voices, with the strains of music floating over all. Here was a scene which no other age or era could have produced except the one which has tamed the lightning flash, and made the great forces of nature run easily in harness.

The number of Indian and Colonial visitors to the Exhibition has quite equalled expectation, and their reception among all classes of the community, and in the various places they have visited, has been extremely cordial and enthusiastic. Everywhere our visitors have been fêted and made much of, and we may hope that all this interchange of courtesies will strengthen the bonds between the mother country and her colonies, and prepare the way for that general federation of all parts of the Empire, the possibility of which is one of the great questions for the future to solve.

The first thing that must have struck the casual visitor who entered the great Indian gallery, was his comparative ignorance of the enormous Empire here represented, with its principalities, states, cities, and towns, of many of which the very names are strange and unfamiliar. The Maharajah of Jeypore may be a very great potentate, as his title implies, but how many of us have ever heard of the ruler and his dominions? But the Maharajah contributes a massive and handsome wooden gateway under which people entered the gallery. An analogous contribution on our part would be to send the Marble Arch to a Calcutta Exhibition; it would task all our resources to effect it, and yet here is an Indian Prince, utterly unknown to us before, one among many Maharajahs who own the supreme raj of the English Crown, and he sends us his gateway with the utmost nonchalance.

And when we come to Rajputana we are almost equally at sea. We may know some-



thing about the Rajput States in a general way, but we were certainly not prepared for all this wealth of carved screens, brown Shesham wood inlaid with ivory, reminding us of the glories of Solomon. And there are contributions from ancient cities, which must have their artists and artisans, their workers in gold and silver, their ancient models and archaic ways of doing things. All this is a record of an ancient civilisation that is quite strange and unfamiliar.

But in Bombay we are on more solid ground, within the empire of railways and factories, where we may almost expect competition with Birmingham and Manchester. In Bengal, however, we are once more in the land of mystery and enchantment—the realm of the Great Moguls, of the peacock throne, of shawls and carpets, and savoury-smelling woods, of carved temples and mosques, of delicate lace-work, of muslins that rival the spider's web in delicacy. Perhaps we are in the North-west Provinces now, for Indian topography is intricate, and trellis-work from the Taj and arches from Agra Fort seem to belong to that locality. And the Baroda Pigeon-house. Who can forget the Pigeon-house that was surely meant for Venus's doves? Everywhere again screens, hangings, silver and lacquer work, pottery, inlaid arms and armour; and with these the veritable product of the looms of Cashmere, the fabrics woven from the hair of its beautiful goats, the shawls of royal texture, and fabrics the product of years of toil.

Madras, too, sends its metal-work and carvings, and Mysore its inlaid furniture and jewels. And cunning must be the metal workers of Hyderabad, inlayers in gold and silver and copper.

The models, too, were full of interest, where we saw that village life which is the one abiding element in Indian history, and the figures of the various races who pursue their various ways of existence in peace and security under the British raj—a strong reminder of the mighty trust we hold for helpless humanity.

Ceylon, too, has its own peculiar character, with its Buddhist temples, its pearls, its cats'-eyes and barbaric gems.

But, in all these Eastern lands, we are in presence of a civilisation that has reached

its acme long ago, and in which decadence is more or less strongly marked.

Quite different from the spicy Indian atmosphere is the vigorous breeze that meets us in the parts devoted to the youthful settlements that are making such giant strides in wealth and population.

Here is Australia making its marvellous advance, with trophies of gold ingots, with wools and sugars and timber, with fruits and wines, with specimens of its wealth in minerals and precious stones. On one side of a screen we may find the figure of a typical Indian artisan, executing the most delicate and artistic design for a handful of rice and a few copper coins, while on the other we have the rough-and-ready miner with pick and shovel, whose weekly wage would keep the other for a year. And again, we are reminded that the rough-and-ready life is supplemented by all the resources of civilisation, that large cities are springing up well organised and arranged, that we have Victorian artists, Australian authors, editors, journalists, with new Londons on the other side of the globe as overcrowded as our own.

There is a prevalent impression that New Zealand occupies the same relative position to Australia as the Isle of Wight to Hampshire, accessible by a steam ferry or something of the kind; and it is difficult to realise that twelve hundred miles of sea divide the two lands. But what a delightful country it must be if there is any faith to be pinned on panoramic views, this archipelago of beautiful islands, with its fine race of aborigines, and its varied products, with its lovely green pastures that recall the mother land?

There is Canada, too, with its healthy frosts and snows, its sleighs and toboggans its moose and beaver, its furs and skins with its sunny side to the Pacific, where bounteous plains are smiling with fruitful harvests. And from the Red Indian we pass to the Chinaman, and from the Chinaman to the Dyak of Borneo, and so among the numerous settlements scattered here and there and everywhere, tasting samples, as it were, of the great round world, which Britannia has collected in one basket, and offers to her children.



## FRENCH ALMANACKS.

As far as the writer's experience goes, provision of the Yearly Calendar in France is chiefly monopolised by the *facteur* or letter-carrier. Towards the close of the year this official usually presents himself—the rural functionary anyhow—in his new blue blouse, his shining kepi, and polished leather belt, with a bundle of documents under his arm. It is the breakfast hour probably; the *facteur* is introduced to the family party. He has a *petit cadeau*, a little present for *monsieur* and *madame*, and he produces a smartly-mounted card, which contains the calendar of the following year, and attached to this a map of the department, the railway time-bill of the district, an alteration in which from year to year is almost unknown, with a *précis* of the postal regulations, and other information. He partakes of coffee and its accompanying cognac in a hasty, business-like way, and departs with profound salutations, to repeat the visit with the rest of his clientèle. It would be altogether against received notions, to offer our *facteur* money for his gift. That will arrange itself on the *Jour de l'An*, when we shall be expected to remember the Almanack, in the little present we shall offer our postman, in a spirit of mutual complaisance.

A story went the round of the French papers a few years ago, detailing a curious result of possessing an almanack of the year to come. A rich and elderly gentleman with no direct heirs was lying on his death-bed one December day. His anxious and affectionate housekeeper, after long persuasion, had induced him to make a will in her favour to the exclusion of his nephews and nieces. The will was being signed and executed when a question arose as to the date. The anxious housekeeper snatched up the almanack; yes, it was the 16th December. The date was inserted. The testator soon afterwards expired, and all seemed *couleur de rose* for the happy woman; and then in settling the preliminaries of the succession, it was found that the old gentleman had died on the 15th of December, the day before the date of the will. The unfortunate housekeeper had

snatched up the calendar for the following year which had just been left by the *facteur*; and, as this error invalidated the will, the poor woman had only the sneers of the exultant heirs for her pains, while these had reason to bless the diligence of the letter-carrier.

There are, however, a good many local almanacks on sale for the benefit of the *paysans* and cultivators, who are mostly of a conservative type, and who like to be reminded of the ecclesiastical fêtes and fasts of the daily services, and of the various epochs of the agricultural year. These, in their yellow covers, and with their coarse paper and indifferent typography, are usually sold at the rate of half a franc each, or "*dix sous*," as the *paysan* prefers to reckon. These too, mostly contain an assortment of short stories, suited to the provincial taste, well pointed generally, and seasoned with Gallic salt. Here, too, we shall find a list of the official hierarchy of the Department, and its judicial establishment, from the *Juge de Paix* of the canton, to the President of the Court of Appeal, in the chief town of the Department.

Soldiers' almanacks are not wanting with information as to the terms of service; the regulations as to the conscription and the *voluntariat*; and with maxims for the guidance of the conscript in his temporary career.

Then there are almanacks in French, which are not strictly French almanacks, such as the *Almanach de Gotha*, an annual presumably for the perusal of Kings and Princes, and others of the *Blood Royal*, although it includes a great deal of useful information, even as to Republics and their rulers.

But in a general way the French do not trouble themselves much about the calendar, or even the changes of the moon, and the *facteur's* handy card supplies all requirements, with the addition of a date box. This last, by the way, is used universally; in private houses and shops, as well as in offices and places of business. And the methodic nature of the people is shown by the regularity with which these are kept up to date.

## CALENDAR FOR 1887.

## JANUARY.

1	S	Circumcision.
2	S	2nd Sunday after Christmas.
3	M	Douglas Jerrold born, 1803.
4	T	Earthquake shock, South Devon, 1886.
5	W	Dividends due at the Bank.
6	Th	Epiphany. Twelfth Day.
7	T	Robert Nicoll, poet, born, 1814.
8	S	Prince Albert Victor born, 1864.
9	S	1st Sunday after Epiphany.
10	M	Plough Monday.
11	T	Matiny at Carthage, 1886.
12	W	Meeting of New House of Commons, 1886.
13	Th	Murder of French Prefect, 1886.
14	F	St. Hilary.
15	S	Louise Michel released, 1886.
16	S	2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
17	M	St. Anthony.
18	T	German Empire proclaimed, 1871.
19	W	Chess Championship contest, N. York, 1886.
20	Th	St. Fabian and St. Sebastian.
21	F	St. Agnes.
22	S	Lord Byron born, 1788.
23	S	3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
24	M	C. J. Fox born, 1740.
25	M	Conv. of St. Paul. Robert Burns born, 1750.
26	W	Thos. N. Talfourd born, 1795.
27	Th	Conservative Cabinet resigned office, 1886.
28	F	General Gordon born, 1833.
29	S	First Reformed Parliament met, 1833.
30	S	4th Sunday after Epiphany.
31	M	Ben Jonson born, 1574.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

First Quarter	..	..	1st.
Full Moon	..	..	8th.
Last Quarter	..	..	16th.
New Moon	..	..	24th.

## FEBRUARY.

1	T	George Cruikshank died, 1878.
2	W	Purif. of the Virgin Mary. Candlemas.
3	Th	Marquis of Salisbury born, 1830.
4	F	Geo. Lillo, dramatist, born, 1793.
5	S	St. Agatha.
6	S	Septuagesima Sunday.
7	M	Charles Dickens born, 1812.
8	T	Sam Butler, poet, born, 1612.
9	W	Sir Evelyn Wood born, 1833.
10	Th	Henry H. Milman born, 1791.
11	F	St. Gilbert of Sempringham.
12	S	Charles Darwin born, 1809.
13	S	Sexagesima Sunday.
14	M	St. Valentine's Day.
15	T	Jeremy Bentham born, 1748.
16	W	Accident at Liverpool Exhib. Building, 1886.
17	Th	Battle of Meenoe, 1848.
18	F	St. Simeon.
19	S	N. Copernicus born, 1473.
20	S	Quinquagesima Sunday. Shrove Sunday.
21	M	Cardinal Newman born, 1801.
22	T	Shrove Tuesday.
23	W	Ash Wednesday.
24	Th	St. Mathias, Apostle and Martyr.
25	F	Peace Conference, 1886.
26	S	Treaty of Versailles, 1871.
27	S	Quadragesima Sunday. 1st Sund. in Lent.
28	M	Tichborne Verdict, 1874.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

First Quarter	..	..	1st.
Full Moon	..	..	8th.
Last Quarter	..	..	16th.
New Moon	..	..	22nd.

## MARCH.

1	T	St. David's Day.
2	W	St. Chad.
3	Th	Thomas Otway born, 1651.
4	F	Queen held Drawing Room in person, 1880.
5	S	Tramway Strike, New York, 1886.
6	S	2nd Sunday in Lent.
7	M	St. Perpetua.
8	T	William Cobbett born, 1762.
9	W	William Etty born, 1787.
10	Th	Prince of Wales married, 1863.
11	F	Railway Strike, America, 1886.
12	S	St. Gregory.
13	S	3rd Sunday in Lent.
14	M	Humbert, King of Italy, born, 1844.
15	T	George Dyer, poet, born, 1755.
16	W	Skating in the Parks, 1886.
17	Th	St. Patrick's Day.
18	F	Princess Louise born, 1848.
19	S	St. Joseph.
20	S	4th Sunday in Lent.
21	M	Robert Bruce born, 1274.
22	T	Emperor of Germany born, 1797.
23	W	Richard A. Proctor born, 1837.
24	Th	St. Benedict.
25	F	Annunciation. Lady Day.
26	S	Duke of Cambridge born, 1819.
27	S	Passion Sunday.
28	M	War with Russia, 1854.
29	T	Marshal Soult born, 1769.
30	W	Sicilian Vespers, 1282.
31	Th	End of American Railway Strike, 1886.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

First Quarter	..	..	3rd.
Full Moon	..	..	9th.
Last Quarter	..	..	16th.
New Moon	..	..	24th.

## APRIL.

1	F	William Harvey born, 1578.
2	S	Miners' Strike, Belgium, 1886.
3	S	Palm Sunday.
4	M	St. Ambrose.
5	T	Dividends due at the Bank.
6	W	James Mill (hist.), born, 1773.
7	Th	William Wordsworth, poet, born, 1770.
8	F	Good Friday.
9	S	Holy Saturday.
10	S	Easter Sunday.
11	M	Bank Holiday. Easter Monday.
12	T	Easter Tuesday.
13	W	St. Hermenegild.
14	Th	Princess Beatrice born, 1857.
15	F	First Prince of Wales born, 1284.
16	S	Irish Land Purchase Bill introduced, 1886.
17	S	Low Sunday.
18	M	George Henry Lewis born, 1819.
19	T	Primrose Day.
20	W	Grecian Army concern, in Thessaly, 1886.
21	Th	Charlotte Brontë born, 1816.
22	F	Royal Society founded, 1662.
23	S	St. George's Day. Shakespeare born, 1564.
24	S	2nd Sunday after Easter.
25	M	St. Mark, Evangelist.
26	T	David Hume born, 1711.
27	W	Edward Gibbon born, 1737.
28	Th	Charles Cotton, poet, born, 1630.
29	F	Grecian War Minister resigns, 1886.
30	S	James Montgomery, poet, died, 1854.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

First Quarter	..	..	1st.
Full Moon	..	..	8th.
Last Quarter	..	..	15th.
New Moon	..	..	23rd.
First Quarter	..	..	30th.

## MAY.

1	S	3rd Sunday after Easter.
2	M	Earl of Redesdale died, 1886.
3	T	Invention of the Cross.
4	W	Sir Thomas Lawrence born, 1769.
5	Th	Empress Eugenie born, 1826.
6	F	Edinburgh Exhibition opened, 1886.
7	S	Foreign Ministers left Athens, 1896.
8	S	4th Sunday after Easter.
9	M	Blockade of Grecian Ports, 1896.
10	T	Indian Mutiny began, 1857.
11	W	Charles Macklin born, 1690.
12	Th	Queen in Liverpool, 1886.
13	F	St. Walburga.
14	S	Robert Owen, philanthropist, born, 1771.
15	S	Rogation. 5th Sunday after Easter.
16	M	Roumelia in agitated state, 1896.
17	T	Lord Farnborough died, 1886.
18	W	Mr. John Cheetham died, 1886.
19	Th	Ascension Day. Holy Thursday.
20	F	John Stuart Mill born, 1806.
21	S	Eruption of Mount Etna, 1896.
22	S	First Sunday after Ascension.
23	M	Opening of Berlin Ars Exhibition, 1886.
24	T	Queen Victoria born, 1819.
25	W	Princess Helena born, 1846.
26	Th	St. Augustine.
27	F	Venerable Bede.
28	S	Thomas Moore born, 1780.
29	S	Whit Sunday.
30	M	Bank Holiday. Whit Monday
31	T	Grosser Kurfürst sunk, 1878.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

Full Moon	..	..	7th.
Last Quarter	..	..	14th.
New Moon	..	..	22nd.
First Quarter	..	..	30th.

## JUNE.

1	W	Prince Napoleon killed, 1879.
2	Th	Herr Most convicted, New York, 1886.
3	F	Robert Tannahill born, 1774.
4	S	Lord Wolseley born, 1833.
5	S	Trinity Sunday.
6	M	Minting won Grand Prix, Paris, 1886.
7	T	St. Philip and St. James.
8	W	John E. Millais born, 1829.
9	Th	Charles Dickens died, 1870.
10	F	Crystal Palace opened, 1854.
11	S	St. Barnabas, Apostle and Martyr.
12	S	1st Sunday after Trinity.
13	M	Thomas Arnold, D.D., born, 1795.
14	T	Sir Harry Vane beheaded, 1662.
15	W	Edward Black Prince, born, 1330.
16	Th	Battle of Quatre Bras, 1815.
17	F	John Wesley born, 1703.
18	S	Battle of Waterloo, 1815.
19	S	2nd Sun. after Trin. C. H. Spurgeon, born, 1834.
20	M	Accession of Queen Victoria.
21	T	Longest Day.
22	W	St. Alban.
23	Th	St. Etheldreda.
24	F	St. John Baptist.
25	S	John Horne Tooke born, 1736.
26	S	3rd Sunday after Trinity.
27	M	Protest of Comte de Paris published, 1890.
28	T	Peter Paul Rubens born, 1577.
29	W	St. Peter and St. Paul.
30	Th	Earl of Argyll beheaded, 1685.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

Full Moon	..	..	5th.
Last Quarter	..	..	13th.
New Moon	..	..	21st.
First Quarter	..	..	28th.

## JULY.

1	F	Battle of the Boyne, 1690.
2	S	Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary.
3	S	4th Sunday after Trinity.
4	M	Declaration of American Independ., 1776.
5	T	Sarah Siddons born, 1755.
6	W	Battle of Sedgemoor, 1685.
7	Th	John Britton, antiquary, born, 1771.
8	F	Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned, 1822.
9	S	Henry Hallam born, 1777.
10	S	5th Sunday after Trinity.
11	M	William E. Forster born, 1818.
12	T	Josiah Wedgwood born, 1730.
13	W	Berlin Treaty signed, 1878.
14	Th	Battle of Aschaffenburg, 1866.
15	F	St. Swithin. Cardinal Manning born, 1808.
16	S	Sir Joshua Reynolds born, 1723.
17	S	6th Sunday after Trinity.
18	M	Declaration of Papal Infallibility, 1870.
19	T	John Martin, painter, born, 1780.
20	W	John Stirling, essayist, born, 1806.
21	Th	Matthew Prior born, 1664.
22	F	Giuseppe Garibaldi born, 1807.
23	S	Marquis of Hartington born, 1833.
24	S	7th Sunday after Trinity.
25	M	St. James, Apostle and Martyr.
26	T	St. Anne.
27	W	Thomas Campbell born, 1777.
28	Th	Robespierre guillotined, 1794.
29	F	St. Martha.
30	S	Samuel Rogers born, 1763.
31	S	8th Sunday after Trinity.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

Full Moon	..	..	5th.
Last Quarter	..	..	13th.
New Moon	..	..	20th.
First Quarter	..	..	27th.

## AUGUST.

1	M	Bank Holiday. Lammas Day.
2	T	Battle of Blenheim, 1704.
3	W	Columbus sailed, First Voyage, 1492.
4	Th	Percy Bysshe Shelley born, 1792.
5	F	Festival at Heidelberg, 1886.
6	S	Dan. O'Connell born, 1775. D. of Edinburgh
7	S	9th Sunday after Trinity. [born, 1844.
8	M	Canning died, 1827.
9	T	John Dryden born, 1631.
10	W	G. J. Goschen born, 1831.
11	Th	Dog Days end.
12	F	Robert Southey born, 1774.
13	S	Old Lammas Day.
14	S	10th Sunday after Trinity.
15	M	Assumption. Sir Walter Scott born, 1771.
16	T	Battle of Gravelotte, 1870.
17	W	Frederick the Great of Prussia died 1786.
18	Th	John Earl Russell born, 1792.
19	F	Straatsburg bombarded, 1870.
20	S	Robert Herrick born, 1591.
21	S	11th Sunday after Trinity.
22	M	Dr. Pusey born, 1800.
23	T	Albert Bridge, Chelsea, opened, 1873.
24	W	St. Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr.
25	Th	Victoria Bridge, Montreal, opened, 1860.
26	F	Prince Albert born, 1819.
27	S	Landing of Julius Cæsar, B.C. 55.
28	S	12th Sunday after Trinity.
29	M	John Locke born, 1632.
30	T	Straatsburg Library destroyed, 1870.
31	W	Thomas Miller, novelist, born, 1806.

## MOON'S CHANGES.

Full Moon	..	..	3rd.
Last Quarter	..	..	11th.
New Moon	..	..	19th.
First Quarter	..	..	25th.

## SEPTEMBER.

1	Th	Lady Blessington born, 1789.
2	F	John Howard born, 1720.
3	S	Princess Alice disaster, 1878.
4	S	13th Sunday after Trinity.
5	M	Robert Fergusson, poet, born, 1750.
6	T	H.M.S. Captain lost, 1870.
7	W	Comte de Buffon born, 1707.
8	Th	William Robertson, historian, born, 1721.
9	F	Battle of Flodden Field, 1513.
10	S	Mungo Park born, 1771.
11	S	14th Sunday after Trinity.
12	M	Sir Wm. Dagdale born, 1605.
13	T	Outbreak of Cholera, Italy, 1885.
14	W	Holy Cross.
15	Th	Liverpool and Manchester Railway opened, St. Edith of Winchester. [1830.
16	F	St. Lambert.
17	S	15th Sunday after Trinity.
18	S	Henry, Lord Brougham, born, 1778.
19	M	Battle of the Alma, 1854.
20	T	St. Matthew, Evangelist.
21	W	Straßburg Theatre burnt, 1870.
22	Th	Battle of Assaye, 1803.
23	F	St. Rusticus.
24	S	16th Sunday after Trinity.
25	S	Locknow relieved, 1857.
26	M	George Cruikshank born, 1792.
27	T	St. Venesiana.
28	W	St. Michael and All Angels. Nelson born, [1758.
29	Th	St. Jerome.
30	F	

## MOON'S CHANGES

Full Moon	.. .. .	2nd.
Last Quarter	.. .. .	10th.
New Moon	.. .. .	17th.
First Quarter	.. .. .	24th.

## OCTOBER.

1	S	Viscount Bellingbroke born, 1678.
2	S	17th Sunday after Trinity.
3	M	Treaty of Limerick, 1691.
4	T	St. Francis of Assisi.
5	W	Horace Walpole born, 1717.
6	Th	St. Bruno.
7	F	Battle of Lepanto, 1571.
8	S	John Hoadley, dramatist, born, 1711.
9	S	18th Sunday after Trinity.
10	M	Great blasting charge fired, New York Har- (bour, 1885.
11	T	Old Michaelmas Day.
12	W	Launch of <i>Great Eastern</i> , 1857.
13	Th	St. Edward the Confessor.
14	F	Battle of Hastings, 1066.
15	S	Allan Ramsay born, 1686.
16	S	19th Sunday after Trinity.
17	M	Duchess of Edinburgh born, 1853.
18	T	St. Luke, Evangelist.
19	W	Leigh Hunt born, 1784.
20	Th	Christopher Wren born, 1633.
21	F	S. T. Coleridge born, 1772.
22	S	Marriage of Prince Waldemar, 1835.
23	S	20th Sunday after Trinity.
24	M	Verdict, Brighton Bigamy Case, 1885.
25	T	James Beattie, poet, born, 1735.
26	W	Marshal Von Moltke born, 1800.
27	Th	Earl Iddesleigh born, 1818.
28	F	St. Simon and St. Jude.
29	S	James Boswell born, 1740.
30	S	21st Sunday after Trinity.
31	M	All Hallows Eve.

## MOON'S CHANGES

Full Moon	.. .. .	2nd.
Last Quarter	.. .. .	10th.
New Moon	.. .. .	16th.
First Quarter	.. .. .	23rd.
Full Moon	.. .. .	31st.

## NOVEMBER.

1	T	All Saints.
2	W	All Souls.
3	Th	St. Winefrid.
4	F	James Montgomery, poet, born, 1771.
5	S	Gunpowder Plot, 1605.
6	S	22nd Sunday after Trinity.
7	M	Verdict, Armstrong Case, 1835.
8	T	John Milton died, 1764.
9	W	Prince of Wales born, 1841.
10	Th	Oliver Goldsmith born, 1728.
11	F	St. Martin. Martinmas.
12	S	Bank Charter Act suspended, 1857.
13	S	23rd Sunday after Trinity.
14	M	Servian and Bulgarian War began, 1885.
15	T	William Cowper, poet, born, 1731.
16	W	John Bright born, 1811.
17	Th	St. Hugh.
18	F	David Wilkie born, 1785.
19	S	St. Elizabeth.
20	S	24th Sunday after Trinity.
21	M	Crown Princess of Germany born, 1840.
22	T	St. Cecilia.
23	W	Old Martinmas Day.
24	Th	St. John of the Cross.
25	F	St. Catherine.
26	S	William Cowper born, 1731.
27	S	1st Sunday in Advent.
28	M	King Alfonso of Spain born, 1857.
29	T	Oliver Goldsmith born, 1728.
30	W	St. Andrew, Apostle and Martyr.

## MOON'S CHANGES

Last Quarter	.. .. .	8th.
New Moon	.. .. .	15th.
First Quarter	.. .. .	22nd.
Full Moon	.. .. .	30th.

## DECEMBER.

1	Th	Princess of Wales born, 1844.
2	F	Coup d'Etat, Paris, 1851.
3	S	Robert Bloomfield, poet, born, 1766.
4	S	2nd Sunday in Advent.
5	M	Orleans occupied by Germans, 1870.
6	T	St. Nicholas.
7	W	Allan Cunningham born, 1785.
8	Th	Indecisive Battle on the Loire, 1870.
9	F	John Milton born, 1608.
10	S	William Hogarth born, 1697.
11	S	3rd Sunday in Advent.
12	M	Surrender of Phalsburg, 1870.
13	T	William Drummond born, 1685.
14	W	Prince Albert died, 1861.
15	Th	George Romney born, 1734. (died, 1878.
16	F	Great Fire at New York, 1835.
17	S	Death of General de Paladines, 1877.
18	S	4th Sunday in Advent.
19	M	J. W. Turner, painter, died, 1841.
20	T	Louis Napoleon proclaimed President, 1848.
21	W	St. Thomas. Lord Beaconsfield born, 1805.
22	Th	Archbishop Taft born, 1811.
23	F	Surrender of Ab-del-Kader, 1847.
24	S	W. M. Thackeray died, 1863.
25	S	Christmas Day.
26	M	Bank Holiday. St. Stephen, Martyr.
27	T	St. John, Apostle and Martyr.
28	W	Lord Macaulay died, 1859.
29	Th	W. E. Gladstone born, 1809.
30	F	John Phillips, poet, born, 1676.
31	S	St. Silvester.

## MOON'S CHANGES

Last Quarter	.. .. .	8th.
New Moon	.. .. .	14th.
First Quarter	.. .. .	22nd.
Full Moon	.. .. .	30th.

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